



COMBAT

Dacian Wars AD 85–106

Roman Soldier

VERSUS

Dacian Warrior

Murray Dahm



Dacian Wars AD 85–106

COMBAT Roman Soldier **VERSUS** Dacian Warrior

Murray Dahm



Illustrated by Giuseppe Rava

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	4
THE OPPOSING SIDES	10
Army composition and motivation • Organization and command Tactics and equipment	
DOMITIAN'S DACIAN EXPEDITION	30
AD 86	
TRAJAN'S FIRST DACIAN CAMPAIGN	44
AD 101	
TRAJAN'S SECOND DACIAN CAMPAIGN	58
AD 106	
ANALYSIS	71
AFTERMATH	75
BIBLIOGRAPHY	77
Sources • Inscriptions and coins • Ancient works • Modern works	
INDEX	80

Introduction

Scene LIX of the 155 made by Conrad Cichorius from plaster casts of Trajan's Column, showing auxiliary cavalry and infantry and Trajan on horseback with Roman fortifications and the Dacians withdrawing. Publishing his photographs between 1896 and 1900, Cichorius divided the scrolling relief of Trajan's Column into 155 scenes made from the 414 plaster casts in Rome of the column, themselves made from the moulds originally produced by order of Napoleon III in 1861–62. Four copies of these casts exist, in Paris (at the Musée des Antiquités Nationales à Saint-Germain-en-Laye), Rome (at the Museo della Civiltà Romana), London (at the Victoria and Albert Museum) and Bucharest (at the Museo Nacional de Historia de Rumanía). (Conrad Cichorius/Wikimedia/Public Domain)

When considering Roman wars fought against the Dacians, those which immediately come to mind are almost exclusively those of the emperor Trajan (Marcus Ulpius Nerva Traianus, r. AD 98–117), who, in fact, fought two campaigns against the Dacians, in AD 101–02 and then in AD 105–06. These resulted in the creation of the Roman province of Dacia and the courses of the campaigns are recorded on the magnificent column in Trajan's forum in Rome. Trajan was not the first emperor to campaign against the Dacians, however. Rome had a long history of conflict with Dacia and the emperor Domitian (Titus Flavius Domitianus, r. AD 81–96) also waged important wars against the Dacians between AD 86 and AD 88/89 – but his campaigns are much less well known and even less understood. It seems clear that Trajan and his commanders learned several important lessons from the earlier campaigns of Domitian and they may have copied aspects of them, perhaps claiming





Metope 34 from the Tropaeum Traiani shows a Roman soldier bearing an oval shield (an auxiliary) confronted by two Dacian *falx*-men (both bearded and wearing only trousers). The Roman seems to be armed with a *hasta* (killing one of his assailants?), but two more surround him. He also wears leggings or trousers and a sword on his left hip, suggesting he may be a centurion. Such a scene does seem to evoke the hard fighting faced by the Romans. If Tacitus' sentiment (*Agricola* 35.2) was widely held – that Roman victories were even more glorious if they were achieved without the loss of Roman (citizen) blood – this may also be a message behind the combat scenes on Trajan's Column, in which only auxiliaries fight. (CristianChirita/Wikimedia/CC BY-SA 3.0)

them as Trajan's own innovations. Trajan may even have got the idea to wage a campaign against the Dacians in the first place from Domitian's earlier operations. Domitian's campaigns are much neglected, however, especially because they were waged by an emperor whose memory was obliterated (*damnatio memoriae*) as soon as he was assassinated in AD 96 and the trend was continued by later historians. Domitian was (and is) regarded as one of Rome's worst and most volatile tyrants and yet it seems abundantly clear that he was very popular with his soldiers.

In many ways, Trajan's Column has done its job spectacularly well as one of its functions was to promote Trajan's campaigns against the Dacians and their king, Decebalus. The idea that such a campaign would need such positive promotion may have been one of the lessons Trajan learned from Domitian, however. Trajan's Column has done its job so well that it is the 'one' campaign we think of, and it was copied for later campaign commemorations such as

Scene XXIV on Trajan's Column shows the battle of Tapae in AD 101, the first scene of combat between Roman and Dacian forces. On the left are ranks of Roman legionaries and Praetorians surrounding the military standards. To the right the auxiliaries engage in combat; this might suggest that, like at Mons Graupius in c.AD 83, the auxiliaries did the fighting and the legions were held in reserve, or that the legions would be brought into the fight after the Dacians had been worn down or manoeuvred into a more advantageous position by the auxiliaries. Trajan stands in front of the legions and some auxiliaries show him the heads of decapitated Dacians. Auxiliary cavalry ride into battle. A fortification can be seen in the background. (Conrad Cichorius/Wikimedia/Public Domain)



the emperor Marcus Aurelius' (r. AD 161–80) Marcomannic and Sarmatian wars on his own column. Although Trajan's campaigns did end in victory and the creation of the Roman province of Dacia, he was not the first or the last emperor to campaign there. Unfortunately, both the wars of Domitian and Trajan are poorly represented in the (literary) sources and in this volume we look at what (else) we can learn about both emperors' wars. This is also peculiar as it is one of the periods of Roman military history for which we have abundant physical material.

The Dacians had long been considered a threat to the borders of the empire; with a boundary along the long Danube River (most commonly called the Ister, Istros or Hister in the sources), their territory threatened the borders of the province of Moesia. Usually, the Ister or Istros referred to the lower Danube from the Iron Gates (the set of gorges east of modern-day Orșova, Romania) eastwards to the Black Sea. The name for the upper Danube as far as the Iron Gates was the Danuvius or Danubius, from which the modern-day name for the entire river comes. Earlier, the expanding empire under the Roman Republic had come into contact with the Thracians, the Getae and other peoples as the Romans pressed into the Balkans. Later,

The second cast of scene XXIV shows auxiliaries in combat with Dacian infantry. The Dacians are a mix of capped and long-haired warriors with cloaks and oval shields; two wield particularly short straight swords. Several Dacian casualties are shown, and one Roman auxiliary holds the decapitated head of an enemy by the hair in his teeth while he continues to attack. Above the auxiliaries, Jupiter joins the Roman attack, hurling a thunderbolt; like many of the weapons, this detail was originally added in metal. (Conrad Cichorius/Wikimedia/Public Domain)



the Getae were identified with the Dacians (or the Dacians were a part of the Getae – several of our sources tell us (Appian, *Roman History* Preface 4; Dio, *Roman History* 67.6.2; Strabo, *Geography* 7.3.2) the Getae and the Dacians were the same people. Strabo tells us (*Geo.* 7.3.12–13) that the Getae were Thracian and states that the Daci were a division of the Getae and they spoke the same language. Justin (*Epitome* 32.3.16) calls the Dacians the descendants of the Getae. The two terms are, to some degree, synonymous – Pliny states (*Natural History* 4.12.80) that the Getae are called by the Romans Dacians. There is, unfortunately, much confusion in the sources, but we rely on Greek and Latin authors for all the information we have. Modern-day ethnographies identify the Getae as those north of the Haemus Mountains, the lower Danube and Black Sea coast, the Dacians as those in modern-day Transylvania, the Sylvan Carpathians and middle Danube (Zahariade 2012: 6). The first time the term *Daci* is used is in Julius Caesar's *Gallie War* (6.25.1).

The first Roman campaign against the Dacians is recorded in the late 2nd century BC, when, in 109–106 BC the governor of the province of Macedonia, Minucius Rufus, repelled a raid by the Dacians and the Scordisci. Another raid was chased back to the Danube in 74 BC by C. Scribonius Curio, also governor of Macedonia. At the same time, a king of the Getae, Burebista, was consolidating and expanding his power, becoming a powerful Getae-Dacian king who ruled for almost 40 years. Strabo tells us (*Geo.* 7.3.11) that Burebista unified the Getae and surrounding peoples, established an empire (*megale arche* – lit. 'strong power') and soon raided over the Danube into Thrace, Macedonia and Illyria. According to Strabo (*Geo.* 7.3.13), Burebista could call upon 200,000 men, but by Strabo's own time in the late 1st century BC or early 1st century AD, that number had apparently dropped to 40,000 men. The numbers of Dacians had grown once more by the late 1st century AD – perhaps closer to 100,000 men – to oppose Domitian and then Trajan. When Burebista was assassinated in 44 BC, his empire did not split into the many tribes of which it was composed, but only into four (later five) parts; the Dacians formed one of those parts, centred around their capital Sarmizegetusa (or Sarmizegethusa/Zermizegethusa; near modern-day Grădiştea de Munte, Romania).

A massive raid by the Bastarnae was repulsed by the Roman general Marcus Licinius Crassus in 29/28 BC with the aid of a king of the Getae acting as a Roman ally against a common enemy. Crassus defeated two other Getic kings and celebrated a triumph 'over Thrace and the Getae' in 27 BC (*Fasti Triumphales* for 4 July 27 BC, *CIL* 1².50). This secured Rome's conquests on



Metope 36 from the Tropaum Traiani shows a Roman soldier attacking two Dacians. The Roman seems to have *squamata* (scale armour) and a *spangenhelm* helmet. He also wears a *manica* on his right arm. The men he faces, however, are different: the seated (wounded) man has a spear and his hair is tied in a Suebian knot, suggesting that he is an ally of the Dacians. It has been suggested that he was a member of the Germanic Buri tribe, and the Suebi were a Germanic people. The other man seems to wield a *sica* (its handle is shorter than the *falces* depicted in other metopes, even though it is used two-handed). He is not bare-chested like the *falx*-men either. (CristianChirita/Wikimedia/CC BY-SA 3.0)

The Dacian wars, AD 85–106

It is unsurprising that Domitian's and Trajan's campaigns against the Dacians took place in the same locations. Given the nature of Dacia and the limited number of routes towards the Dacian capital of Sarmizegetusa (aka Sarmizegetusa Regia; near modern-day Grădiștea de Munte, Romania), we should expect the fighting to have occurred over the same terrain. Thus, we find several mentions of Tapae as a location for the battle won by Tettius Julianus in AD 88 and a later battle in 101. Although the exact site of this battlefield is debated, it was probably also close to the site of the destruction of the force led by Cornelius Fuscus in AD 86.

The march towards Tapae was probably the same for Domitian and Trajan in 101. After assembling forces at Viminacium (near modern-day Kostolac, Serbia) in Moesia Superior, they marched to Lederata (modern-day Ram, Serbia) and crossed the Danube on a bridge of boats. The Roman army then probably marched to Arcidava (near modern-day Vărădia, Romania), then Centum Putei (near modern-day Forotic, Romania). From there, it marched to Berzobis (near modern-day Berzovia, Romania) and Aizis (modern-day Fârluig, Romania). From there the army marched to Caput Bubali (modern-day Delinești, Păltiniș Commune, Romania) and then Tibiscum (modern-day Caransebeș, Romania). The column marched to Acmonia (modern-day Agmonia, Romania) then to Pons Augusti (site of a Roman fort just south of the modern-day village of Voislova, Romania). The battlefield of Tapae was most probably near modern-day Bucova, perhaps 8km west of modern-day Zeicani, although there are alternatives.

The heartland of Dacia housed a complex of citadels in the precipitous Orăștie Mountains. In addition to Sarmizegetusa were five other fortresses, several of which would need to be reduced before the capital could be tackled. These were

Costești-Cetățuie, Costești-Blidaru (both near modern-day Costești, Romania), Piatra Roșie (modern-day Luncani, Boșorod Commune, Romania), Bănița (modern-day Bănița, Romania) and Căpâlna (modern-day Căpâlna Commune, Romania). There were other Dacian fortresses too: Ardua (modern-day Ardeu, Romania), Popești (Pădurea Cioarin, Popești, Călărași, Romania), Cetățeni (Grigoroaia, Cetățeni, Argeș, Romania), possibly Piatra Neamț, Ziridava (modern-day Pecica, Romania), Piatra Craivii (or Apulum, near modern-day Alba Iulia), Bălănești (Bălănești Commune, Romania) and Tilișca (Tilișca Commune, Romania).

Other routes are conjectured, especially for Trajan's first invasion in AD 101 (see Oltean 2014: 91), but they are not unambiguously mentioned and are based on speculation as to two crossing points. Despite a Dacian attempt to distract the Romans by a raid that reached Nicopolis ad Istrum (modern-day Nikopol, Bulgaria), the conclusion to the campaign in AD 102 saw peace agreed and a Roman garrison placed in Sarmizegetusa and elsewhere.

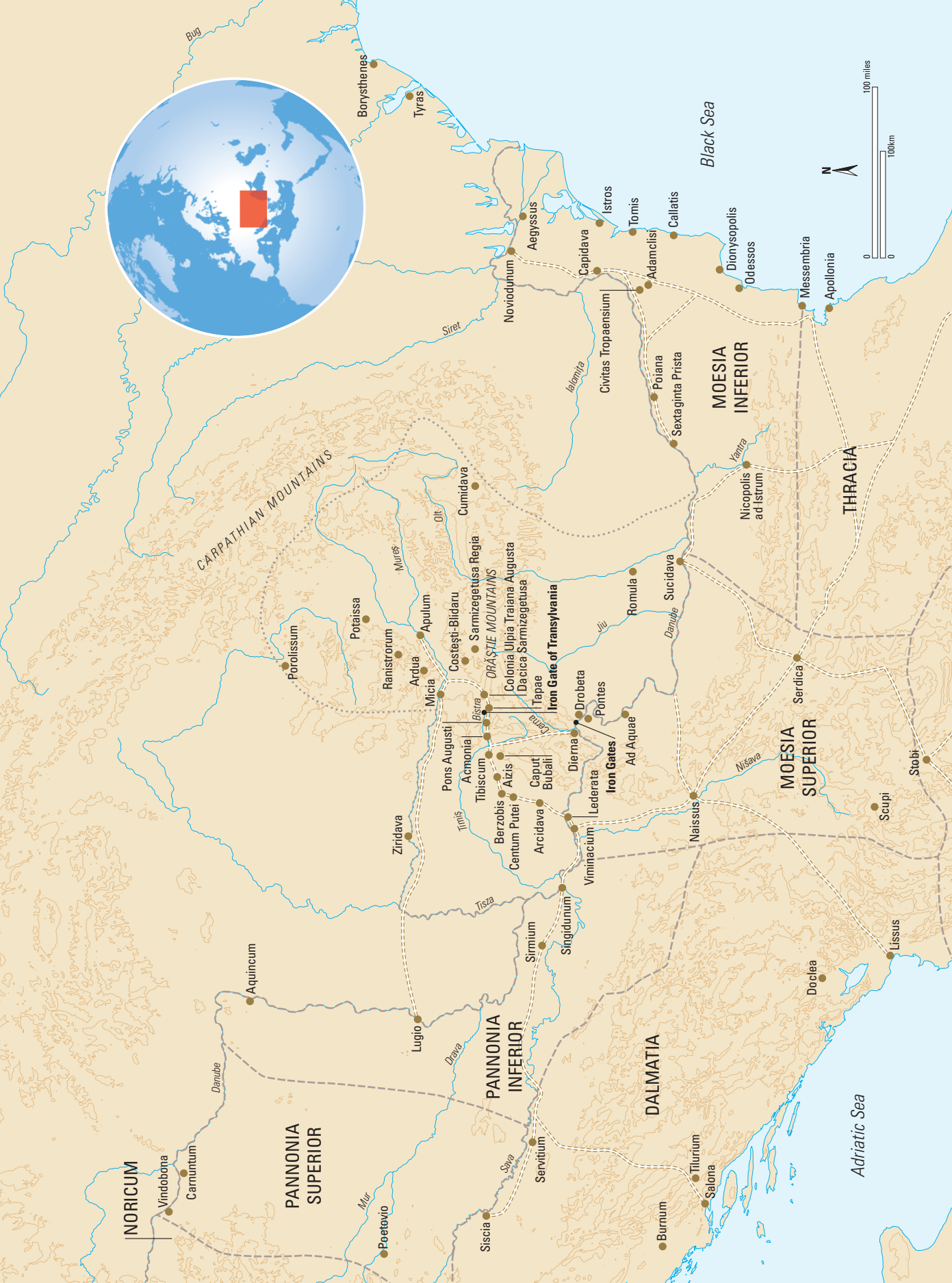
The invasion of AD 106 probably advanced on multiple routes, retracing the earlier route from AD 101 but perhaps also others up the Cerna River valley (to join the expedition at Tibiscum) and another crossing at Sucidava (modern-day Corabia, Romania), before proceeding along the Jiu River to the east. A third column may have crossed at Sucidava and then via modern-day Pitești and towards modern-day Brașov, Romania.

After the Romans reduced the fortresses in turn, a final battle was fought at Porolissum (8km from Zalău, Romania) and thereafter Decebalus fled. The organization of the new province of Dacia was then undertaken, moving the capital to Colonia Ulpia Traiana Augusta Dacica Sarmizegetusa (near modern-day Caransebeș, Romania) and installing garrisons and building Roman forts at other sites.

the western coast of the Black Sea; Rome's conquests were slowly encroaching on the Dacian heartland.

Scene LXVI of Trajan's Column shows a major engagement, with all manner of troop and equipment types. We see siege works and *ballistae* as well as legionaries building their siege works and in reserve (again) as the various types of auxiliaries fight the battle against Dacian infantry. (Conrad Cichorius/Wikimedia/Public Domain)





The Opposing Sides

ARMY COMPOSITION AND MOTIVATION

Roman

The period of Domitian's and Trajan's campaigns against the Dacians is the 'classic' period of the imperial Roman Army. Legions consisting mainly of volunteer citizens were its backbone and for the period in question there were consistently between 28 and 30 legions.

The legions of the late 1st century AD were still recruited from Roman citizens. Recruits were mostly volunteers, although there were exceptions; *legio V Alaudae* ('of the Lark') was the first non-citizen legion, founded of non-citizens from transalpine Gaul in 52 BC; they may have worn lark feathers on their helmets, reflecting their Gallic origin, but the legion's emblem was an elephant. When legions were lost (as two may have been under Domitian) they were replaced by raising new legions. Both Domitian (*I Minervia*) and Trajan (*II Traiana*, *XXX Ulpia*) raised new legions to deal with losses and perhaps in response to manpower shortages, although there are not the signs of the manpower difficulties that would afflict the Roman Army later in the 2nd century AD.

Each legion consisted (at least on paper) of between 5,120 and 5,280 men organized into ten cohorts (sing. *cohors*, pl. *cohortes*); the first cohort of each legion seems to have been double-sized. Each cohort had six centuries (*centuriata*), each of 80 men, so 480 men in each cohort; the first cohort had five double-centuries (*Fortifying a Roman camp, de munitionibus castrorum*, 3–4; Vegetius, *Epitoma Rei Militaris* 2.6–8; CIL 8.18072). Hyginus, writing in the age of the emperor Hadrian (r. AD 117–38), gives the first cohort a strength of 960 men (*de mun.* 3.1). The number of 5,280 is Hyginus' figure (*de mun.* 1–5, 42.4) and the one most commonly found. Attached to each legion were 120 cavalry, acting as scouts and dispatch riders (Josephus, *Jewish War*

3.6.2). When legions were assembled to participate on an active campaign we might reasonably assume they were brought up close to notional strength, although losses and attrition might have reduced those numbers rapidly.

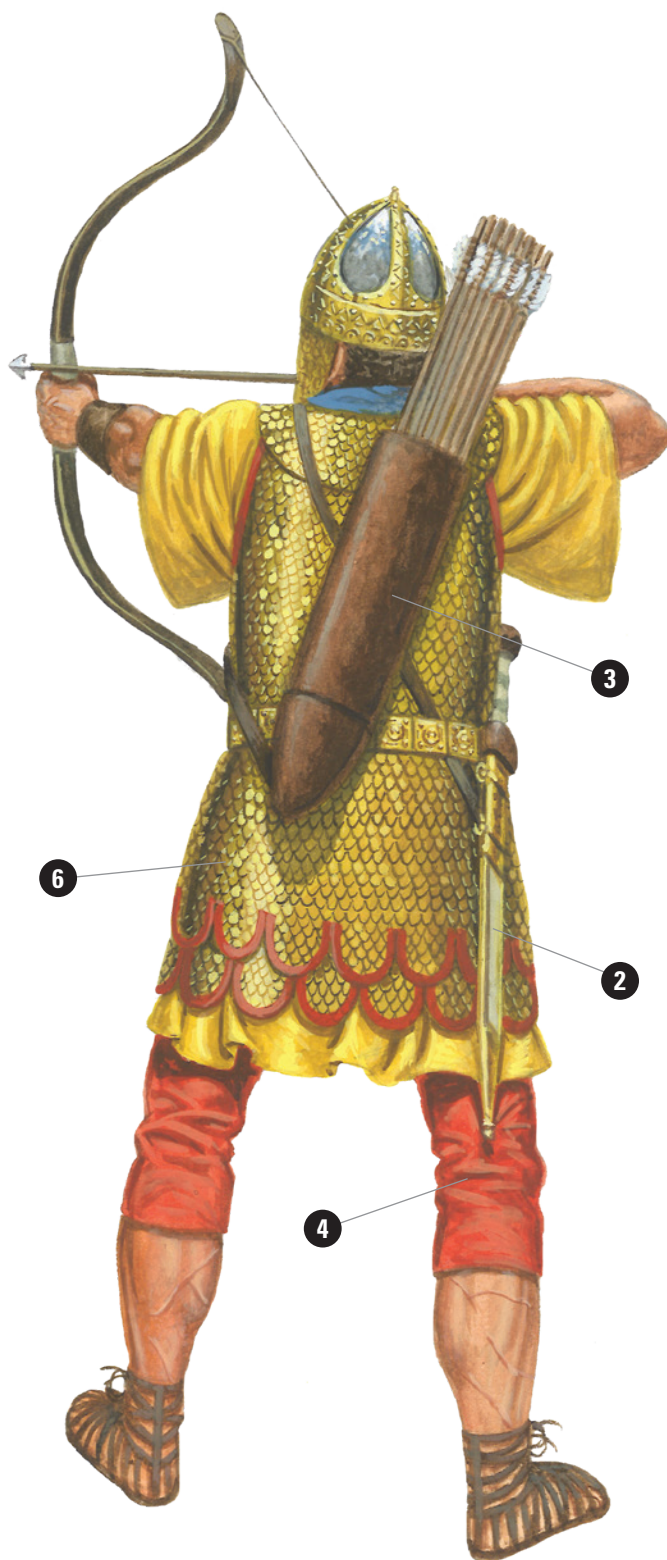
In addition to the legions there were various units of *auxilia*, allies of Rome drawn from local populations who performed roles as specialist missile and light troops and cavalry. Service in the *auxilia* was rewarded with citizenship. Many such units accompanied Roman campaigns, but often our literary sources do not name them all and we rely on the many surviving inscriptions to tell us where they served. These auxiliary units could take advantage of the styles of warfare used by the local populations from which they were drawn, such as archer units from Syria, Crete or Iturea (northern Galilee; modern-day Palestine and Lebanon). The cavalry forces of Roman armies were also supplied by auxiliary units, such as those of Numidian horseman shown on Trajan's Column. As a general rule of thumb, it is usually assumed that there were an equal number of men in auxiliary units as there were in legions (Tacitus, *Annales* 4.5.21), so if a campaign had nine legions (theoretically 47,520 men) then there would have been a corresponding number of men in the auxiliary forces. By the Flavian period (AD 70–96), auxiliary units were organized into *cohortes* of infantry of 480 men each and cavalry *alae* ('wings', sing. *ala*) of 480 or 512 men, divided into *turmae* ('squadrons', sing. *turma*) of 30 or 32 men each. Arrian states (*Tactica* 17.3) that the *ala* was 512 men strong.

There were three types of auxiliary units. As well as cavalry *alae* and infantry *cohortes* (*peditata*), there were mixed units (*cohors equitata*) of 600 men: 480 infantry and 120 cavalry. By the Flavian period there were also doubled units of auxiliaries nominally each of 1,000 men – the *ala milliaria* (in reality between 720 and 768 men) and the *cohors miliaria* (800 men). A *cohors equitata milliaria* had 800 infantry and 240 cavalry. Across the whole empire there were between 80 and 88 *alae* and 247 and 279 *cohortes* (estimates differ): 56,000–75,000 auxiliary cavalry and 125,000–143,000 auxiliary infantry.

In addition to these units, the campaigns of Domitian and Trajan were imperially led and this meant that the cohorts of the Praetorian Guard (usually based in Rome) accompanied the emperor. The Guards feature quite prominently in both campaigns and on Trajan's Column. The first Roman emperor, Augustus (r. 27 BC–AD 14), had established the Praetorian Guard as a permanent unit within Rome, initially nine cohorts of 480 men (slightly smaller than a legion). Eventually, under Domitian, this was increased to ten cohorts, an establishment that continued until the Praetorian Guard was disbanded in AD 312. The strength of each cohort was also increased to 1,000 men, so the total (10,000 men) was almost the equivalent of two full legions; by Domitian's reign this may have been brought back to 800 men per cohort. Terms of service were shorter in the Praetorian Guard and the pay was better, initially double that of legionaries. Domitian, however,



A statue of a Roman Praetorian Guardsman from the reign of Trajan, found in Puetoli (modern Pozzuoli, Italy) in 1800 and now in the Pergamon Museum, Berlin, Germany (inv. SK 887). The guardsman is armed with a *hasta* (spear) rather than a *pilum* (javelin) and has a *gladius* (short sword) on his right hip. He has a round *parmula* or *parma* shield rather than a curved rectangular *scutum* and wears a typical *tunica* and *paenula* cloak; his *cingulum* belt is visible under the cloak but he wears no other visible armour. He wears *caligae* sandals but no helmet, although his haircut is typical of Trajanic-period portraits. (Albert Krantz/Wikimedia/Public Domain)



Here we see a Roman auxiliary archer based on those depicted on Trajan's Column. This soldier has been scouting ahead of Cornelius Fuscus' marching column (perhaps inefficiently) and has been surprised by a Dacian ambush that will soon cut a swathe through Fuscus' force, resulting in the loss of a standard (legionary or Praetorian) and Fuscus' death. Our archer shoots at his attackers in a desperate attempt to get back to the head of Fuscus' column and warn him of the impending disaster.



Weapons, dress and equipment

Armed with a recurve bow (**1**), he also wears a sword (*gladius*; **2**) on a baldric on his right hip; his quiver (**3**) is worn on his back.

Our archer wears a tunic and leggings (**4**) as well as sandals (*caligae*; **5**). The colours of legionary and auxiliary tunics are not known for certain; red is probably not as common as is commonly shown and ideas of uniformity are probably misplaced. He wears a scale mail cuirass (*lorica squamata*; **6**) and helmet (*galea*; **7**) based on the depiction on Trajan's Column. There are a variety of Roman auxiliary archers shown on Trajan's Column and no two are presented with the same helmet, armour or dress.

Our archer also wears a military belt (*cingulum militare*; **8**). Although the archers on Trajan's Column do not wear the military belt,

other archers' tombstones from the 1st century AD show this detail. Examples include the tombstones of Hyperanor (*CIL* 13.7513), dated to the second half of the 1st century AD, and Tiberius Julius Abdes Pantera (*CIL* 13.7514), dating from slightly earlier. These clearly show the *cingulum militare* and it seems to have been a point of pride for all Roman soldiers. Pantera was from Sidon and served 40 years. Deployed with the first cohort of archers (*cohors I sagittariorum*), he had perhaps attained the rank of standard bearer (although based on the enigmatic *miles exs*). Hyperanor was also from the first cohort of archers. Both tombstones were found in Bingium (modern-day Bingerbrück, Germany).



Bas-relief of Roman legionaries in close formation from Glanum (known by several other names, close to modern-day Saint-Rémy-de-Provence, France) from the 1st or 2nd century AD, currently held at the Fourvière Gallo-Roman museum, Lyon, France. What looks like *hamata* (mail armour) is depicted and *gladii* (swords) on the right hip as well as a variety of three obviously differently decorated curved rectangular shield designs next to one another in the same 'unit', perhaps suggesting that ideas about uniformity of shield designs throughout the same legion may be misplaced. (Rama/Wikimedia/CC BY-SA 3.0)

Dacian

We are much less well informed on the composition, recruitment and motivation for Dacian armies. For most of our information on Dacian culture for all periods in the ancient world we rely primarily on Greek and Roman sources, both what remains of the written record and what we can see on Trajan's Column and other monuments. From these necessarily biased sources we must sift information and much remains unknowable. We are also aided by the rich and plentiful archaeological finds in modern-day Romania, even though many of the finds have not been published outside of Romania and those that are are often only described in Romanian. What is more, the archaeological record sometimes gives a different picture from that appearing on Trajan's Column and in some of the written sources, although there are accurate details (such as the *sica* and *falx* blades).

Dacian society seems to have consisted of a variety of tribes under individual rulers who owed allegiance to an overall king (Duras and Decebalus in the times of Domitian and Trajan; Decebalus may have been the war-leader of Duras). Armies consisted of nobles (*tarabostes*) who may have been better armoured and armed; we have earlier graves with mail, helmets and shields and the (Roman) depictions of Dacian nobles do show such items. There were also commoners (*comatus*) who fought, probably with less armour (perhaps none) and with simpler weapons. The distinctive *pileus* or Dacian

increased legionary pay to 300 *denarii* per year; this was the first increase since Augustus and pay would not be augmented again until the late 2nd century AD. This is probably one of the reasons Domitian remained very popular with the Roman Army. Nevertheless, by the time of Domitian and Trajan, Guards received almost triple this remuneration – Domitian was even more popular with the Praetorian Guard than with the Roman Army. Recruits for the Praetorian Guard were also taken from a younger age (15–32 as opposed to 18–23 for the legions) and only ever recruited from Italy, Spain, Macedonia and Noricum, the most prosperous and Romanized areas of the empire.

Service in the legions was for 25 years after which (if they lived that long) retiring legionaries would be rewarded with land. Men could be promoted to receive more pay during their service and rewards and donatives could grant them cash rewards. Auxiliaries also enlisted for 25 years after which they and their children were rewarded with Roman citizenship. Sometimes, whole units were rewarded with citizenship for their service. We find retired auxiliaries re-enlisting as legionaries for a further 25 years in the hope that they might also gain land for future generations.



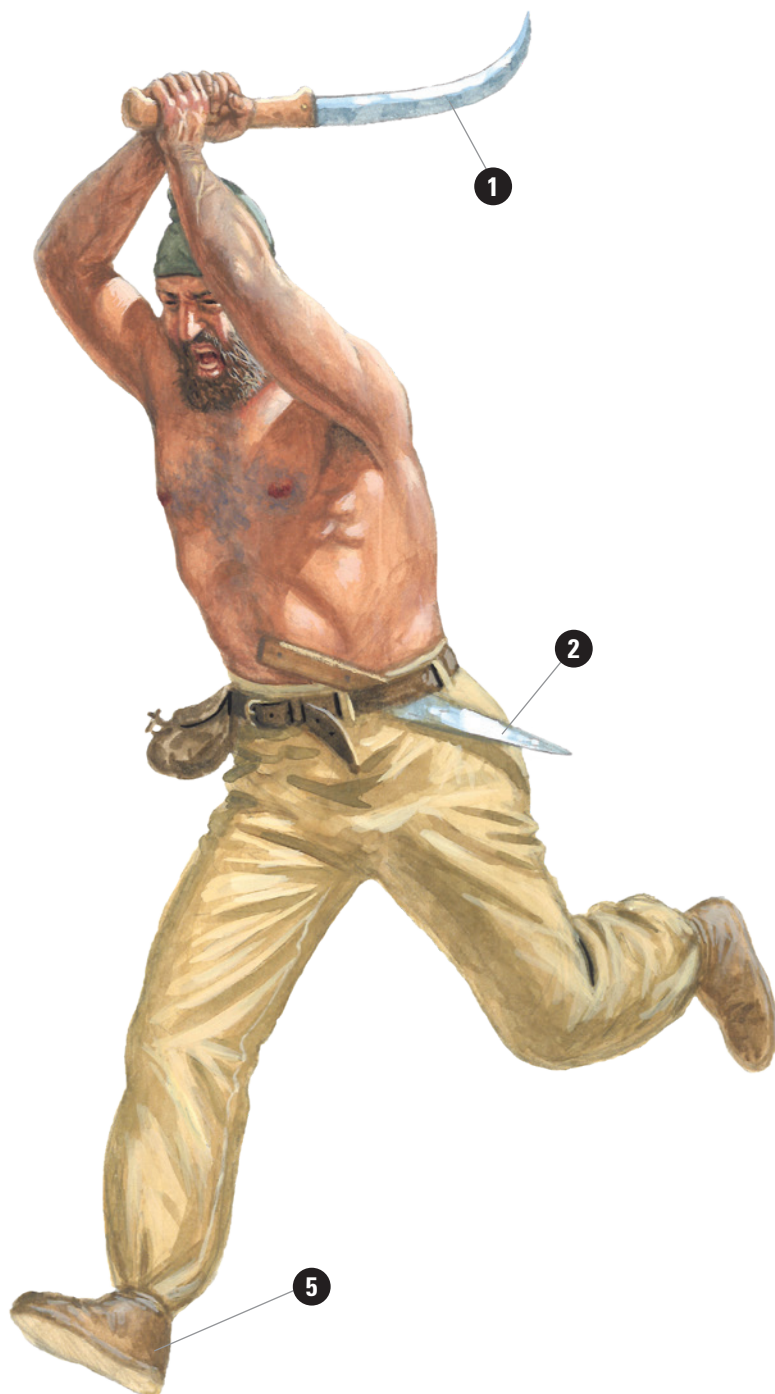
A fragment of a Dacian mail shirt from the warrior tomb in Cugir. Discovered in 1979, this tomb yielded up remarkable finds including fragments of helmets and horse bits (providing an archaeological corroboration for the description in Ovid and elsewhere). *Hamata* may have been the reserve of elite Dacian warriors, but its survival shows that at least some Dacian warriors wore armour. No remains of Dacian shields have been found in any grave, however. (Codrin.B/Wikimedia/ CC BY-SA 3.0)

cap visible on busts and statues might have been a mark of nobility or of free status, in which case there might have been free commoners. Men depicted without such caps (so unfree) might suggest a lower class that also fought, perhaps with less equipment and with agricultural tools. The literary record is full of Dacian raids into Moesia and across the Danube – a long-standing tradition of gaining wealth and booty for the Dacians. As such, men probably all partook in raids and warlike activities and so were highly motivated. In the wars of Domitian and Trajan they were also defending their homelands against invaders so, again, they must have been strongly motivated to defend themselves and their families and land.

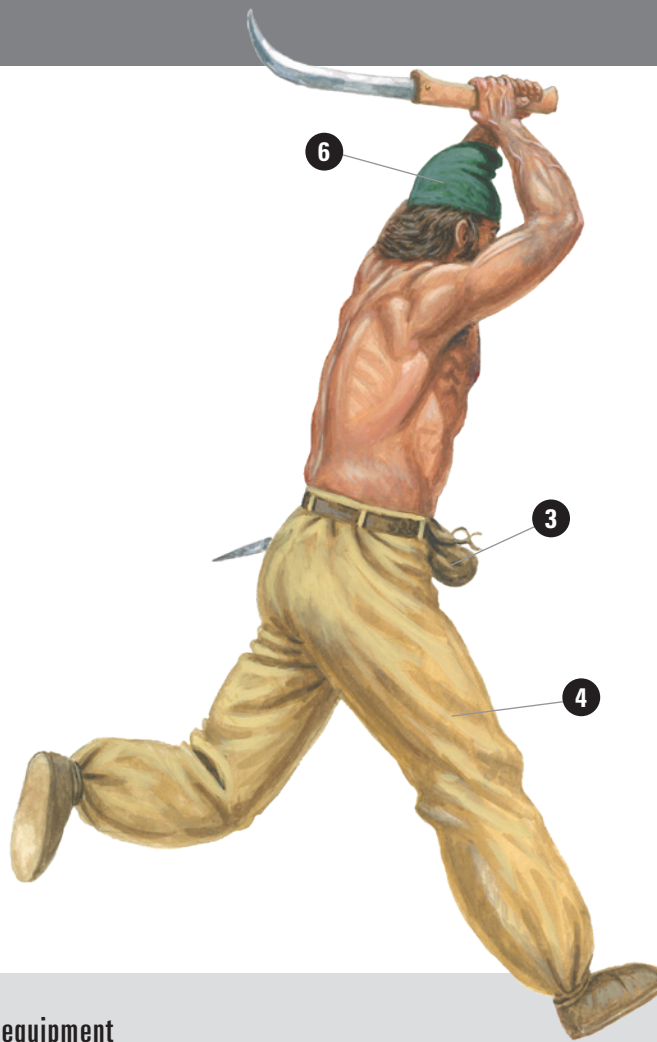
The Dacians were a liminal people to Rome, but we find them mentioned relatively often in unexpected places. Horace (Horatius Flaccus) mentions them as allies of Antony against Octavian who ‘almost toppled the city’ (*Odes* 3.6.13–16), meaning Rome; and in the context of Augustus’ later projected campaign against them, he tells us that they ‘are best known for their flying arrows’ (*Satire* 2.6.52–54). This image is reinforced in Ovid and



Ruins of Bersobis (modern-day Berzovia, Romania). Although these may be from the later fort built on the same site, they give some sense of the issues still facing Dacian archaeology – overgrown sites in hilly terrain – and we should remember that the two sites of Bersobis and Aizis were not in the Carpathians proper. (Alex.D/Wikimedia/ CC BY-SA 3.0)



Here we see a typical *falx*-armed Dacian warrior who has participated in the ambush of the marching column of Cornelius Fuscus. Waiting for the optimal moment to strike (and perhaps taking advantage of poor scouting), he joins in the charge that will surprise and defeat Fuscus' column. He charges the hapless Roman scouting forces, including archers. Soon, he and his comrades will fall on the remainder of Fuscus' unsuspecting column.



Weapons, dress and equipment

Armed with a two-handed *falx* (1), he also carries a short, straight knife (2) such as those found in the archaeological finds (but not regarded as being as typical as the short *sica*) as well as a pouch (3) on his belt. We do not know whether the *falx* was deployed by individuals, selecting it as their weapon of choice, or if *falces* were deployed in units.

He wears belted trousers (4), boots (5) and a Dacian cap (6). Although Trajan's Column (and other contemporary monuments) show all Dacian warriors with cloaks and tunics, the Tropaeum Traiani monument in Adamclisi, Romania, shows Dacian warriors without shirts and armed with two-handed *falces*. Although the status of the *pileus* or Dacian cap is usually argued to represent noble (*tarabostes*) status, there are caps on the Adamclisi *falx*-men and an archer on Trajan's Column (scene XXIV), and other, clearly noble, figures who do not wear caps. So, the status of the cap may be more complicated.

Our ambushing warrior, relying as he does on surprise and speed, is shirtless. The men on the Adamclisi monuments are shirtless and this has, perhaps, given rise to the idea that the men so-armed were regarded in some way as sacred or blessed. This is similar to other cultures in which men who eschewed armour thought themselves protected by divine power or that they were willing sacrifices to their

gods, and we can remember Ovid calls the Getae 'Mars-worshipping' (*Tristia* 5.3.22) and, perhaps, 'veritable pictures of Mars' (*verissima Martis imago*; *Tristia* 5.7.17). Some manuscripts, however, offer '*mortis*' at this point (*verissima mortis imago*), translating as 'veritable pictures of Death'. Both descriptions, no doubt, would have been considered appropriate by Ovid.

Ovid notes that the clothes of the Getae consist of skins and 'stitched breeches', which 'keep out the evils of the cold; of the whole body only the face is exposed' (*Tristia* 3.10.19). He refers with loathing to 'their chests covered with hides and with their long hair' (*Tristia* 5.10.31–32). We know that Dacians wore long-sleeved tunics, trousers, leather shoes and sometimes cloaks; these are all shown on Roman monuments, as is the Dacian cap. Some examples of the cap from sculptural fragments seem to have a flatter peak than others. Some men are shown in trousers with no tunic. Cloaks were also worn to keep out the cold, fastened with ornate *fibulae*. We see these too on Roman monuments. Perhaps the hides (*pellibus*) Ovid mentions were a poorer man's cloak. Waist belts were sometimes laden with amulets, pouches and weapons, especially the short *sica*, often in ornate scabbards.

OPPOSITE

An iron *sica* blade from the 1st century AD now in the Museo Nacional de Historia de Rumanía, Bucharest. These curved blades, both short and long as well as the longer-still *falx*, were the defining weapons of the Dacians (at least as far as the Romans were concerned) and were devastating in combat, although it is unclear whether they were used alongside other weapons or employed by specific units as shock weapons. We do not know the Dacian name for them, but *falx* comes from the 'curved' sword of Ovid (*Metamorphoses* 4.720, 4.727). A single occurrence of *sica* occurs in Valerius Maximus (*Memorable Deeds and Sayings* 3.2.12) relating the death of Publius Licinius Crassus Dives Mucianus in 130 BC. Maximus was writing in the reign of Tiberius (r.AD 14–37). He credits the dagger belonging to a Thracian – who probably used similar weapons to the later Dacians. A *sica* blade has been found in a warrior's grave in a necropolis in Alexandria (4th or 3rd century BC) – probably that of a Thracian mercenary. Later, writing in AD 165, Marcus Cornelius Fronto mentions that Trajan's soldiers on his later Parthian campaign made light of the Parthians' arrows in comparison to the 'gaping wounds inflicted by the scythes [*falcibus*] of the Dacians' (*Principia Historiae* 9). (Dorieo/Wikimedia/CC BY-SA 4.0)

Dio Chrysostom. On Roman monuments, although there are occasionally Dacian archers, the dominance of archers is not apparent whereas archaeology supports the literary record that the Dacians relied on archery. Similarly, archaeology demonstrates the use of straight 'Celtic' swords and many different types of spears and javelins. Trajan's Column and the Adamclisi metopes do not emphasize these weapons, preferring instead to feature those most Dacian of arms, the curved *sica* and *falx*. A similar situation prevails with cavalry; there are Dacian cavalry present on Trajan's Column but the literary record suggests they were far more common. Graves often contain horse bits and furniture, supporting this analysis.

There were also clearly allies of the Dacians, and we are told of Decebalus gathering allies. Some are named: the Roxolani, Iazyges, Bastarnae and Sarmatians. On Trajan's Column it is difficult to differentiate between these groups, who probably did have cultural peculiarities that distinguished them, but only the Roxolani/Sarmatians can be clearly identified.

In the autumn of AD 8, the Augustan poet Ovid (Publius Ovidius Naso) was exiled by the emperor Augustus to Tomis (modern-day Constanța, Romania), where he was to remain 100km from the mouth of the Danube on 'the very edge' of the empire (*Tristia* 2.200), technically in what Rome called Moesia. Aged 50 at the time of his exile (Syme 1978: 214), Ovid remained in Tomis until his own death c.AD 17 or 18 despite Augustus having died in AD 14. Ovid observed (with exaggeration and poetic licence) that he lived among his enemies who poisoned their 'every dart [*spicula*]' (*Epistulae Ex Ponto* 1.2.16) and that: 'Equipped with these the horseman circles the frightened walls as a wolf runs about the fenced sheep. The light bow once bent with its horsehair string remains with its bonds ever unrelaxed. The roofs bristle with implanted arrows as if shrouded in a veil, and the gate scarce repels attack with sturdy bar' (*EEP* 1.2.17–22). The *spiculum* was usually a thrown javelin in Roman thinking; no one else tells of poisoned Dacian weapons, but Ovid repeats the claim (*EEP* 3.1.26, 4.7.11–12, 4.7.36, 4.9.83, 4.10.31, 5.7.13–16; *Tristia* 3.10.64, 4.1.77, 5.7.16). He repeats the dominance of archery often (*EEP* 1.2.25–26, 1.2.45–46, 1.7.9, 1.8.6, 3.1.1–2, 3.5.45, 3.10.55, 4.3.51–52, 4.9.78), even typifying Roman warfare against the Dacians as the Roman sword against the Dacian bow (*EEP* 4.9.78). He does, however, mention other armament, writing of training in horsemanship and of hurling the javelin (*iaculum*), possibly from horseback (*EEP* 2.9.57–58). According to Ovid, he lived in a place 'ever trodden by the swift horses of a neighbouring foe' (*EEP* 3.1.8). He even sent one of his correspondents a full Scythian quiver (*EEP* 3.8.19–24), calling the arrows in it the 'pens' of the land (and blood its ink).

Ovid describes the peoples in the vicinity of Tomis as 'eager for plunder and bloodshed' (*Tristia* 4.4.59) and he warns that no one ventured outside the walls of Tomis for fear of enemy warbands. Land often went uncultivated because one needed to hold a plough in one hand and a sword in the other; shepherds had to wear helmets and their pipes warned not of wolves threatening their flock but of an approaching warband (*Tristia* 5.10.23–26). Such raids would often see the raiders take captives and sell them into slavery. He sums up that 'Bows and full quivers lend them courage, and horses capable of marches however lengthy and the knowledge how to endure for

long both thirst and hunger, and that a pursuing enemy will have no water' (*EEP* 1.2.79–86). This paints an evocative picture of Dacian raids (and even sieges) and, even allowing for poetic exaggeration, Ovid was an eyewitness so should be granted some authority, especially given that his depiction is reinforced by that of Dio Chrysostom, also exiled among the Dacians, writing 90 years later and painting almost the same picture.

We have a remarkable record in the *Twelfth Discourse* of Dio Chrysostom (or Dio of Prusa), which was delivered at Olympia in AD 97 just after the author had travelled through Dacia and observed the people prior to Trajan's campaigns. Just like Ovid, he paints a picture of the Dacians as being armed and ready for war (*TD* 12.19). Importantly, Dio observed 'one could see everywhere swords, everywhere corselets, everywhere spears, and the whole place was crowded with horses, with arms, and with armed men' (*TD* 12.19). Although he does not mention bows explicitly, horses, swords, armour and spears are mentioned – a better fit with the archaeological record than the Roman architectural reliefs. Exiled from Rome under Domitian, Dio toured the west coast of the Black Sea, visiting Borysthenes (near modern-day Odessa, Ukraine); he also travelled along the Danube, reaching as far as Viminacium (near modern-day Kostolac, Serbia), from where both Domitian and Trajan would launch campaigns. It may have been here (and for Trajan) that Dio produced his (lost) *Getica*; it is also possible that he produced the work for Domitian earlier, perhaps as a way to rediscover imperial favour and be recalled from his exile.

Philostratus, writing a life of Dio Chrysostom in his *Lives of the Sophists* in the late 2nd century AD and from which we learn of the *Getica*, contends that Dio's was a voluntary exile. He was not banished but merely hid himself from men's eyes and the tyrant Domitian, and spent his time travelling among the Getae (*LoS* 7/488). He would be recalled or invited to Rome once more under the emperor Nerva (r. AD 96–98) in AD 96; Dio's delivery of an oration at Olympia the following year was almost as strong a statement as possible that he was back. His relationship to Trajan seems to have been a cordial one and became closer. Philostratus suggests (*LoS* 7/488) that Trajan even asked Dio to stand beside him in his triumphal chariot when he celebrated his Dacian triumph. Perhaps this favour was connected to the production of a history of Trajan's campaigns. Dio refers to the emperor contextually in several orations and delivered at least four in his presence. The orator was with the emperor prior to his departure on campaign in AD 101 (perhaps when he was at Viminacium) and, after Trajan's departure on campaign, Dio travelled home to Prusa; he would return to Rome as the emperor returned there too (*Forty-ninth Discourse*).

Dio Chrysostom's possible presence in Viminacium possibly just before Trajan's campaign launched suggests a kind of literary entourage for these campaigns. We know of the numbers of literati who accompanied the emperor Lucius Verus (r. AD 161–69) on his Parthian campaign in the AD 160s (Lucian of Samosata, *How to Write History* 2–32), but there is scant information for earlier campaigns. We know Trajan's doctor Statilius Crito (aka Crito of Heraclea), who accompanied Trajan on the campaign, also wrote a (lost) history of them. We also have Dio's (lost) *Getica*, and Quadratus Bassus (one of Trajan's commanders) may also have written a history.



ORGANIZATION AND COMMAND

Roman

For both the campaigns of Domitian and Trajan we are dealing with imperially led Roman expeditions. These were relatively rare (and after Trajan would become unusual again). Nominally, both emperors were in complete command of their armies. The way historians, both ancient and modern, deal with the two emperors' command could not be more different, however. Trajan is given credit for decision making and leadership, but Domitian is denied all such acknowledgement.

All serving soldiers swore their allegiance to the emperor and he commanded all Roman troops by his *imperium maius* ('supreme command'). In reality, however, the emperor had many subordinate commanders upon whom he relied. These included the governors of the provinces in which the campaigns originated – usually thoroughly military men – and the *legati legionis* (commanders of the legions). In addition to these men, the emperor could choose to take other commanders with him: the *consilium principis* (advisory council). Although this seems to have been a somewhat informal arrangement, we actually get a great deal of detail on Domitian's *consilium* in particular, but for all the wrong reasons. Juvenal's *Satire 4*, a mock epic regarding a Domitianic fishing expedition (4.72–129), is aimed at deriding Domitian and his advisors. It mentions a series of sycophantic courtiers, but at least four of them were military men with experience on the Rhine and Danubian frontier. This catalogue of advisors was also meant to mock Statius' (lost) poem *De Bello Germanico* on Domitian's German war – three of the names of Domitian's military advisors in that war are the same.

Putting Juvenal's satiric purpose aside and although there is some debate as to which individuals are meant in some cases, Domitian's *consilium principis* contained men with legitimate and long-standing military experience in the area (see Crook 1955: 50–51). Plotius Pegasus (Juvenal, *Sat.* 4.77) had been governor of Dalmatia and *praefectus urbi* (urban prefect); Rubrius Gallus (*Sat.* 4.105) had lengthy military experience in Moesia (replacing Fonteius Agrippa) and had fought the Sarmatians under Vespasian; Marcus Pompeius (*Sat.* 4.110) had also been governor of Dalmatia; and Cornelius Fuscus (*Sat.* 4.111–12) had been *procurator* in Pannonia and would soon lose his life in Dacia (Juvenal's comment is that he was saving his guts for the vultures of Dacia but, meanwhile, was planning battles in his villa). Although we know little of his career before AD 69, in that year Fuscus emerges as one of Vespasian's most energetic supporters to secure him the throne (Tacitus, *Histories* 2.8). Fuscus probably had military experience, but he seems to have rejected a senatorial career.

Others associated with Domitian at this time – 11 members of the *consilium* are named and include jurists, soldiers, diplomats and statesmen – may also have had relevant experience. Montanus (Juvenal, *Sat.* 4.107) may have been the man who commanded in Moesia under Nero (although the name is otherwise associated with a notorious gourmand); Valerius Festus too had military experience and governed Pannonia and Hispania Tarraconensis (*CIL* 5.531); Rutilius Gallicus had commanded *legio XV Apollinaris* at Carnuntum



(near modern-day Petronell-Carnuntum and Bad Deutsch-Altenburg, Austria); and Aurelius Fulvus had defeated the Roxolani in AD 68/69 when *legatus* of *legio III Gallica*. Even the detested figure of Crispinus (*Sat.* 4.1, 14, 108) was the Praetorian Prefect and, despite Juvenal's abuses, he must have had skills and some relevant experience of command. Juvenal's satire was aimed at abusing Domitian and his courtiers, but there were men with relevant military experience. As overall commander, Domitian would have appointed men to command imperial provinces and legions in his stead. Many of the appointments were made through the emperor's goodwill and he appointed subordinates as commanders of whole provinces and of legions.

Trajan, too, had a *consilium*, although they come in for none of the abuse heaped upon Domitian's *consilium*. Trajan's commanders included the Praetorian Prefect, Tiberius Claudius Livianus, and his *consilium* included Lucius Licinius Sura; Quintus Sosius Senecio (Sextus Julius Frontinus' son-in-law); Lusius Quietus; Lucius Fabius Justus; Gnaeus Pompeius Longinus; the future emperor Hadrian; and probably Decimus Terentius Scaurianus, especially on the second campaign (he would become one of the first governors of the new province of Dacia).

Each legion was commanded by a *legatus legionis*, the legate of the legion, usually a senator on the standard career path, one that usually included multiple military commands. A *legatus* was usually someone who had been one of the two most junior senatorial positions, a *praetor* or a *quaestor*, and had military experience; generally, men in their thirties. Prior to that they had held the office of *tribunus laticlavus*, the second-in-command in each legion. After holding their post as a *legatus*, senators were in line to become consul and thereafter to be appointed the governor of a province (the *legatus Augusti pro praetore* – the 'legate of the emperor acting for the praetor'). Some provincial commands were more in demand than others and came with several legions under their command. Others, such as Moesia or Germania, were particularly 'hot' campaign areas where the chance for glory and advancement (or defeat and death) was greater.

Third in command of the legion was the *praefectus castrorum* (camp prefect), who was quartermaster and normally promoted out of the centurionate. Men of the equestrian class could also command legions, usually after command

Frieze A of the Cancelleria Reliefs now in the Vatican Museums (Inv. 13389–91). Originally commissioned by Domitian, the bas-relief panels later underwent recarving to alter his image to that of the emperor Nerva. The reliefs date to after AD 83 and so either the Germanic wars against the Chatti or the Dacian wars are a probable subject. Frontinus was the commander in the Germanic wars, but also seems to have been involved in the Dacian campaign. It is therefore possible he is one of the figures depicted behind the emperor, perhaps the fifth or sixth figure from the left. We see details of different shields – rounded oval *scuta* and a flat-round *parmula* – in the figures on the right of the panel, who are probably Praetorians. The shields are intricately decorated and the *parmula*-equipped figure's *cingulum* is just visible under his (civilian) toga. The soldiers all wear *caligae* (sandals) and have a variety of javelins and spears. The gods Mars, Minerva (Domitian's favourite god – Dio, *Roman Histories* 67.1.1), and Roma encourage Domitian as do other figures, representing *genii*, the spirits of the senate and people of Rome. (Rabax63/Wikimedia/CC BY-SA 4.0)

Frieze B of the Cancellaria Reliefs, although damaged, shows Domitian's father, Vespasian (r. AD 69–79) and Domitian, possibly depicting the meeting of the two in September AD 70, when Vespasian finally arrived in Rome. Domitian (still only 17) had been sent to Rome with Vespasian's senior advisor and general, the governor of Syria, Gaius Licinius Mucianus. Tacitus paints a picture of an out-of-control Domitian with untethered passions and aggression (*Historiae* 4.86). Domitian, however, commanded in person to suppress the revolt of Civilis in Germania Inferior (Josephus, *Jewish War* 7.85–88; Martial, *Epigram* 2.2; Frontinus, *Strategemata* 4.3.14), something Tacitus tries to suppress. Any depiction implying that Vespasian was unhappy with Domitian's conduct in AD 69 and 70 is therefore unlikely. Found under the Palazzo della Cancellaria (hence their name) in the 1930s, the reliefs were originally part of a monument to Domitian. The panels are 210cm in height although both are incomplete and so the original length is unknown – the surviving length of Frieze B is almost 6m. They may have originally been included in a triumphal arch erected by Domitian but subsequently torn down and, under Nerva, the panels were repurposed. (Rabax63/ Wikimedia/CC BY-SA 4.0)



of auxiliary units. They might be even more experienced than senatorial candidates because they would command auxiliary units first and only then embark on a senatorial career, holding the requisite offices at an older age. Below these senatorial commanders were the tribunes, receiving on-the-job training for young senators and equestrians, but the actual command of the legions fell to the centurions (sing. *centurio*). Each century of 80 men was commanded by a centurion (59 or 60 per legion) and there was a hierarchy beginning with the *primus pilus* (lit. 'first spear'; the chief centurion) who commanded the first century of the first cohort. After a one-year appointment he might be promoted to *praefectus castrorum*, or go on to command an auxiliary unit as its *praefectus* if he had accumulated enough wealth to become a member of the equestrian class.

Auxiliary units were usually commanded by men of the equestrian class, a qualification introduced under the emperor Claudius (r. AD 41–54). Such men's first steps on a military career included being one of the five *tribuni angusticlavii* (a 'narrow-stripe' tribune – the narrow stripe signified the equestrian class) per legion who acted as junior officers. Under the Flavians the tribune could no longer be a member of the same people as the auxiliary unit; revolts in the AD 60s, such as that by Julius Civilis in AD 68–70, had shown this to be a hazard. Each auxiliary unit was commanded by a *praefectus* or occasionally a *tribunus*. Under them, each *turma* was commanded by a *decurio* and each century by a *centurio*, although auxiliary centurions and legionary centurions were of entirely different status. It was more prestigious to command an auxiliary *ala* than a *cohors* and we do find men succeeding to the more senior command and even going on subsequently to command legions.

Each Praetorian cohort was commanded by a *tribunus* and the whole Praetorian Guard was commanded by two *praefecti*, unsurprisingly known as Praetorian Prefects. Initially, all the officers were of the equestrian class and the Praetorian Guard would accompany the emperor to war, although imperially led campaigns were rare. Emperors also had the *equites singulares Augusti*, a cavalry bodyguard of a double *ala* 1,000 men strong that also accompanied the emperor on campaign.

Dacian

We are particularly poorly informed regarding Dacian leadership and command. Under Domitian there seems to have been a king, Duras, but Diurpaneus (or Dorpaneus) was his general. Other, earlier kings are suggested, but we do not hear of subordinates. Diurpaneus, it has been argued, was one and the same man who fought Trajan 20 years later: Decebalus. The historian J.B. Bury suggested (1893: 407 n.) that 'Decebalus' was a title rather than a name – a view that has recently been revived. Covering the same period, Cassius Dio named Decebalus as king (*RH* 67.6.1) and does not mention a Duras or Dorpaneus/Diurpaneus. Bury credited the change to militancy on the Danube border to the emergence of Diurpaneus/Decebalus in the lead-up to the campaigns under Domitian; a man who may have united the Dacians and now acted in strength. Decebalus then succeeded as king and strengthened his position in the years of peace between the last campaign of Domitian in AD 89 and the first campaign of Trajan a little more than ten years later. If they are one and the same man, he would remain in control in Dacia until he finally took his own life at the end of Trajan's second campaign.

Below Decebalus there were nobles, and several of these men are shown on Trajan's Column and represented in surviving busts and statuary. We do not know the relationship between these nobles and their king; perhaps it was some form of fealty, but we must be very wary of projecting a medieval 'feudal' or 'serf' model on to other societies. Other Dacian tribes are sometimes described as fiefdoms (Oltean 2014: 72). Whatever the relationship, these other nobles provided troops and probably commanded subordinate sections of Dacian armies. Exactly what those parts were, we do not know. We do hear in Cassius Dio of a subordinate to Decebalus, Diegis; he is identified as Decebalus' brother (Oltean 2014: 36) and was sent to negotiate peace with Domitian (Dio, *RH* 67.7.2). Dio then tells us that 'Vezinas, who ranked next to Decebalus' (*RH* 67.10.2) faked his own death in battle in order to escape, but we know no more about him. His actual name may have been Avezina (Dana 2001, cited by Oltean 2014: 36). At the start of Domitian's campaign, Jordanes tells us (*Get.* 78) that there were some leaders who had refrained from fighting, but that the success of the ambush of Fuscus' column encouraged such men to join the fight against Domitian. Probably some of these nobles and their own followers commanded the many fortresses of Dacia and we do know some of them could switch their loyalty from Decebalus to Rome or wished to avoid conflict, such as the people of the Buri, a Germanic tribe (Dio, *RH* 68.8.1).

Metope 31 from the Tropaeum Traiani shows a Roman in *hamata* with banded *manica* arm protection killing a bearded Dacian warrior armed with the two-handed *falx*. The *falx*-man wears a cap; another capless Dacian has been killed at his feet. Noteworthy is the warrior's grip on the sword – it appears to be an overhand grip as if the sword has been drawn that way and used in a downwards stab. (CristianChirita/Wikimedia/CC BY-SA 3.0)



Metope 32 (or XVIII) from the Tropaeum Traiani shows, in contrast to the previous metope, a Roman soldier wearing *hamata* and *manica* who is stabbing a Dacian *falx*-man underhand from beneath and behind his raised *scutum*. The *falx* is of a different design to that on metope 31 (and those on metopes 34, 36 and 37). The *falx*-man is once again bearded and wearing only trousers. Oltean (2014: 108–09) argues that Dacians never fought bare-chested, so these warriors are not Dacian and that the knotted hair suggests they are all Germanic. The curved blades would tend to argue against this, however, and the weapons most resemble the *falx*, *sica* or earlier *rhomphia* of the Thracians. Given the contrast in Suebian knot- and *pileus* cap-wearing men, Dacians and Germanic allies are a better fit than all Germans with Dacian-type weapons. (CristianChirita/Wikimedia/CC BY-SA 3.0)



Although we do know of armoured and more heavily equipped (noble) soldiers, cavalry and less heavily equipped infantry, and we can infer the existence of archers, javelinmen and warriors armed with the *sica* and *falx*, we do not know if these were separate units or integrated into mixed units, or indeed all mixed together. Likewise, we do not know if such units were regarded as more important arms of Dacian armies, although some reconstructions argue as much. Some models, perhaps supported by the images of the Adamclisi metopes especially, suggest that *falx*-armed warriors fought as a unit, perhaps a sacred one, although this is unclear. All are shown unarmoured, bare-chested, bearded and wearing only trousers and a cap. It is also unclear if the *falx* was a special weapon or something developed from an agricultural tool. The fact that they survive in burials, however, suggests they were a weapon of some significance and they, and *sica* blades, certainly were depicted in order to identify a Dacian enemy in Roman art.

TACTICS AND EQUIPMENT

Roman

It is a peculiar fact that we lack detailed accounts of Roman imperial battles that give us a clear sense of how the legions fought. We presume that legions advanced, supported by the auxiliaries on the wings, until they were within range to launch their *pila* (javelins, sing. *pilum*). Each man would have two *pila*. Once these were expended, the legionary would draw his *gladius* (short sword) and engage in hand-to-hand combat with the enemy. We are told only in a 4th century AD source (Vegetius *Epitoma Rei Militaris* 2.6) that Roman front lines consisted of the first cohort on the right, then the second, the third in the centre, then the fourth, and the fifth on the left. Behind the first cohort, in a second line, were the sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth and the tenth cohort on the left of the second line. If more than one legion was deployed



Metope 44 from the Tropaeum Traiani shows two ranks of Roman soldiers advancing. The front rank all have *pila* held underarm while behind them come the standards – the standard in the centre is the *aquila* of the legion (we cannot tell which legion). This, in combination with metope 43, which shows the same scene with slight variations, suggests the advance of ranks of Roman soldiers. The men wear *hamata* and the layout suggests they have their shields in close order – perhaps the final advance of the legions into combat. (CristianChirita/Wikimedia/CC BY-SA 3.0)



A relief from the Tropaeum Traiani at Adamclisi and now in the Istanbul Arkeoloji Müzeleri, Turkey. These two men are officers (their swords are on their left hips), but their rectangular *scuta* are of the same design (suggesting they are from the same unit). Both carry *pila*. They may be wearing banded armour and possibly have beards, unusual at the time; their hairstyles too are unusual. (Dosseman/Wikimedia/CC BY-SA 4.0)

in the battle line they would, presumably, have been deployed next to one another in the same manner.

Of the role of *auxilia* in Roman battles we are often left entirely in the dark. Often we are not told they were even present, accounts only preserving details of the legions present. One exception to this is Arrian's *Ektaxis kat' Alanōn*, written in the AD 130s and describing Arrian's deployment of two legions and auxiliaries against a cavalry foe, the Alans. Although this came some 30 years after the end of Trajan's Dacian wars, it is still useful. It gives us both the marching order and battle order of a Roman force in more detail than any other surviving source. It also includes all the auxiliary units in addition to the legions Arrian had in his force. Arrian deployed his legions in the front centre of his battle line, eight men deep, with a hill on either side. Behind them were his auxiliary missile troops to fire over the legions. Other, similar units were deployed on the flanks. The cavalry – four complete and eight partial *alae* – were kept in

reserve. Arrian also had catapults, of which each legion had several, deployed behind the legions and on the flanks. We might see how both Domitian and Trajan and their generals deployed their armies but it must be noted that Arrian's fight with the Alans was a set-piece battle – something the Dacians probably avoided if at all possible.

Two exceptions to the general rule of literary silence on the use of auxiliary forces occur just prior to the period of Domitian's Dacian wars: in Josephus' *Jewish War* and in Tacitus' account of the battle of Mons Graupius against the Caledonians in c.AD 83 (*Agricola* 35–38). These may be supremely useful, especially bearing in mind that on Trajan's Column it is the auxiliaries who do the fighting, whereas on the Adamclisi metopes it is the legionaries who fight.

For the battle of Mons Graupius, Tacitus tells us (*Agricola* 35.2) that the 8,000 auxiliaries, unusually, were in the front lines rather than the legionaries; 3,000 (auxiliary) cavalry were posted on the wings. The legions remained deployed in front of the camp, well behind the front line of auxiliaries. Agricola considered that 'his victory would be vastly more glorious if won without the loss of Roman blood, and he would have a reserve in case of repulse' (*Agricola* 35.2). There were four legions, perhaps five, in Britain at this point: *II Augusta*, *II Adiutrix*, *VI Victrix*, perhaps *IX Hispana*, and *XX Valeria Victrix*. We do not know the number of legions Agricola had with him (but he does use the plural), so a proportional number of legions to auxiliaries is difficult to assess. The 8:3 ratio of infantry/cavalry is close to the 4:2 ratio Velleius Paterculus gives us for auxiliary infantry/cavalry in AD 9. In usual assessments, in which auxiliaries are taken as roughly equalling the number of legionaries, this would give us two complete legions to match the 11,000 auxiliaries. Tacitus then goes into even more detail, telling us there were three Batavian infantry cohorts and two Tungrian infantry cohorts, making 1,440 Batavians and 960 Tungrians. The battle began with an exchange of missile weapons (*Agr.* 36.1), again an aspect of typical Roman warfare

often omitted from the sources – perhaps it was expected that every reader would know how Roman armies fought. The five named cohorts then closed with swords and were joined by the other cohorts and they advanced up the hill towards the enemy (*Agr.* 36.2). The Caledonians attacked the Roman reserve cavalry; they were opposed by four (auxiliary) cavalry *alae* (*quattor equitum alas*; *Agr.* 37.1), that is between 1,920 and 2,048 men. These four *alae* were a reserve, however, so perhaps not included in the original 3,000 cavalrymen. In which case, Agricola had, at least, 8,000 auxiliary infantry and 5,000 auxiliary cavalry with him, which might suggest that he had closer to three legions. In the closing parts of the battle Tacitus mentions (*Agr.* 37.4) a strong force of lightly armed cohorts and even dismounted cavalrymen. This was the advantage that the use of auxiliaries gave and corroborates Josephus' description of them, although Cornelius Fuscus' force was not able to make the most of these advantages.

Trajan's Column, by contrast, shows multiple engagements in which the advantages of the auxiliaries were used to great effect. Indeed, only auxiliaries are shown doing the fighting; the legionaries build camps and other engineering works but do not fight. Even at Mons Graupius, however, these lightly armed and dismounted auxiliaries advanced in disciplined, compact order (*compositos firmibus ordinibus*). The legions did not engage at all; the auxiliaries alone inflicted a massive defeat on the Caledonians who outnumbered the entire Roman force. Tacitus tells us (*Agr.* 37.5–6) that 10,000 Caledonians and only 360 auxiliaries fell.

We can use these descriptions to help us in contemplating how Domitian and Trajan fought the Dacians – in the case of Domitian, only a couple of years later, and in the case of Trajan, only 20 years subsequently.

Dacian

As no historical accounts survive in a length giving any detail for Dacian battle tactics we are forced to look elsewhere.

Ovid recounts (*EEP* 4.7) a campaign of which he had heard (he was not an eyewitness) conducted by the *primus pilus* Iulius Vestalis to retake the town of Aegyssus (modern-day Tulcea, Romania), which had been seized by the Getae. Although this account is delivered in terms of epic poetry in a letter addressed to Vestalis himself, and it has been entirely doubted (Williams 1994: 41), its details have verisimilitude. The Romans, coming down the Danube, advanced their standards against the Getae (*EEP* 4.7.27–28) and charged the enemy

A short *sica* blade and scabbard from the 1st century BC Dacian warrior tomb in Cugir, Romania. Other finds include richly decorated scabbards in gold, implying a variety of levels of society possessed (and cherished) such blades; they may not have been just weapons but also items connoting personal status. (Wolfgang Sauber/Wikimedia/CC BY-SA 3.0)



steel and the hill (*EEP* 4.7.33). There is a hill that commands the site and it was the location of a later Roman fort. This detail supports the accuracy of the report, although it may have been an open battle; the hill rather than the town is attacked, suggesting the Getae positioned themselves uphill – seemingly a common tactic. The *ferrumque* (steel) braved by the Romans may, therefore, mean the Getan *falces*. Ovid states that the Getae defended themselves with stones ‘greater in number than winter’s hail’ (*EEP* 4.7.34), *iaculorum* (poisoned missiles, meaning javelins) and arrows, though Ovid uses the term *spicula* – ‘arrows with painted feathers cling to your helmet, scarce any part of your shield lacks a wound’ (*EEP* 4.7.37–38). The two sides then closed and the battle was fought *dextera dextrae* (hand-to-hand) ‘at close quarters with the fierce sword’ (*EEP* 4.7.44). This was the typical Roman tactic of closing hand-to-hand with swords; *in extremis* the Dacians would fight in such a manner, but may have come off second best when battle came to that, being as they were generally less well armoured than their Roman opponents. The remaining Roman soldiers were inspired by the bravery of their centurion; many Getae fell and the town was retaken. These details are entirely credible. We might extrapolate this and Ovid’s other details to suggest that the Dacians used missiles to great effect from a distance and perhaps the downhill impetus to charge with *falces* and *sicae*, but that general hand-to-hand fighting was avoided unless as a last resort. What the Dacian cavalry tactics were is hard to guess, but may have consisted of harassing and missile fire.

Frontinus, writing c.AD 87 during the reign of Domitian, includes a Dacian stratagem, telling how Scorylo, ‘a chieftain of the Dacians [*dux Dacorum*]’ (*Strategemata* 1.10.4; his name can also be found spelled Scorilo), encouraged the Dacians not to attack even though the Romans were torn in civil strife (*armis civilibus* – the civil wars of AD 69?). He demonstrated his point by pitting two dogs against one another, but then introducing a wolf. The two dogs, which had been fighting one another, together turned to face and attack the wolf. ‘By this illustration, Scorylo kept the barbarians from a movement which could only have benefited the Romans’ (Frontinus, *Strategemata* 1.10.4). This stratagem shows a complexity of strategic thinking not usually credited to the ‘barbarians’ by Roman authors. It is entirely possible that this relates to Jordanes’ king Coyllus (*Get.* 73), who ruled the Dacians for 40 years before Dorpaneus and that this stratagem relates to AD 69. As such, it might suggest intentions within the Dacian population to raid into Rome at that time; when the Roxolani and Iazyges raided the following year, they killed Fonteius Agrippa. Tacitus tells us (*Hist.* 3.46) that the Dacians raided at this time because the Roman Army had been removed from Moesia and the Dacians therefore had no fear of the Romans. This also reinforces the picture in other sources that raiding into Moesia and Roman territory was never far from the Dacians’ minds – combined with the Scorylo stratagem it suggests, however, that some Dacian commanders saw the wisdom in withholding from such raids.

The situation in Tacitus might suggest that, ultimately, Scorylo/Coyllus was unsuccessful and some sections of the Dacians could not resist the lure of an undefended Roman province. That raid was defeated, however, because Vespasian’s chief supporter, Gaius Licinius Mucianus, governor of Syria and one of Vespasian’s most capable generals, was on his way to Italy leading *legio VI Ferrata* and vexillations of several others. He learned of the

battle of Cremona – the second battle of Bedriacum on 24 October AD 69, where Vespasian's supporters defeated the emperor Vitellius (r. AD 69) – and so turned aside from his march to defeat the raid. Tacitus relates (*Histories* 3.46) that the Dacians occupied both banks of the Danube and stormed the winter quarters of both the auxiliary infantry and cavalry. This passage also tells us that when the legions were withdrawn, auxiliaries alone guarded the frontier. Interestingly, in company with Mucianus was a young Domitian, just turned 18 (his birthday was on the same day as the second battle of Bedriacum). Domitian's first taste of campaigning against the Dacians may have come that year. Fonteius Agrippa was then transferred from Asia, where he had been proconsul, to govern Moesia and was given additional troops from the army of Vitellius to protect a turbulent border. Fonteius Agrippa was then killed by the Roxolani and Iazyges raids in AD 70. It is possible these events were all part of the same raids, although we are told Mucianus repelled the raids and Fonteius Agrippa was killed subsequent to that.

In addition to the tactics of missiles shot and thrown from a distance and from moving horses, the Dacians clearly could use their blades. Curved *sica* blades vary greatly in length (20–50cm) with a cutting edge on the inside. The curved *sica* dagger was shorter but was probably not an offensive weapon. All *sicae* were one-handed weapons. The *falx* was a two-handed weapon with a blade some 90cm in length (the shaft was a similar length). Some reconstructions call the longer *sica* a one-handed *falx*. Many reconstructions and re-enactments demonstrate the destructive power of such blades and explain the introduction of *manicae* to protect the right arms of the Roman troops seen on the Adamclisi metopes.

We can also surmise that the destruction of a legion in AD 86 was probably achieved by mounting an ambush in a suitable pass – a combination of missiles and assault on a point of the Roman marching column possibly by *falx*-armed troops and perhaps more heavily armoured noble infantry. The Dacians do seem to have avoided set-piece battles as much as possible (perhaps a message in the Scorylo stratagem), only fighting in such a way as a last resort. The Roman victories at Tapae may have been the defeats of attempted ambushes; the first victory there may even have been in revenge for the ambush of Fuscus. The Dacians may also have attempted these tactics against Trajan. Later, during Trajan's second campaign, the reduction of Dacian fortresses involved the besieging of those fortifications. The manner of such warfare was probably very similar and we do see Dacian siege engines, perhaps even supplied by the Romans or informed by Roman expertise.



Now in the British Museum, London (Inv. 1805.0703.436), this marble relief of Dacian weapons and equipment dates from the 2nd century AD. Items include quivers, swords in scabbards, an axe, armour, a variety of shields (both in shape and design), a dragon standard and a ram's head (perhaps also a standard), as well as helmets, a tunic, arrows and possibly a *ballista* bolt. The presence of arrows and quivers (although not a bow – but perhaps the item on the lower left is a bowcase) suggests that the picture in Ovid of the importance of archery as a Dacian weapon is, in fact, accurate. (TimeTravelRome/Wikimedia/CC BY 2.0)

Domitian's Dacian Expedition

AD 86

BACKGROUND TO BATTLE

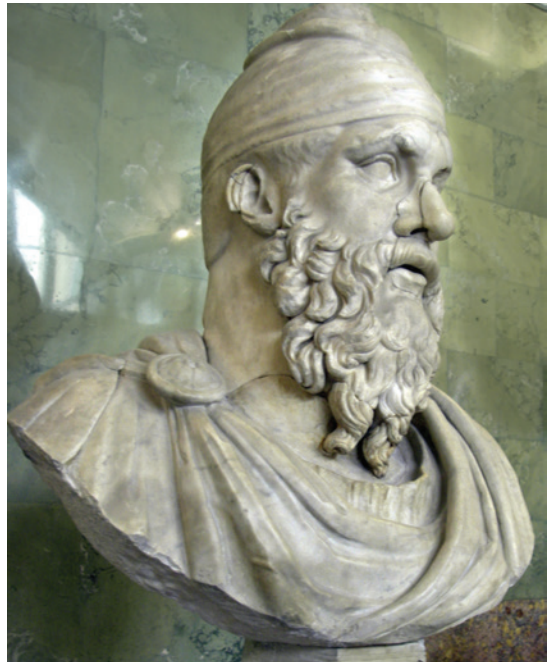
Roman legionary tile stamp with *LEGXXII* (*legio XXI Rapax*) from Rheinzabern, Germany. This may have been the legion lost by Cornelius Fuscus in Dacia or it may have been lost in Sarmatia later, in AD 92. (Haselburg-müller/Wikimedia/CC BY-SA 3.0)



Augustus pushed forward the Roman conquest of the lower Danube; by AD 6, he had created the *praefectura civitatum Moesiae et Treballiae*, an independent military command that commanded the territory of modern-day Serbia and north-western Bulgaria. The province of Moesia, with a garrison of two legions (*V Macedonica* and *IV Scythica*) was established by AD 15, stretching along the southern bank of the Danube from Singidunum (modern-day Belgrade, Serbia) to the mouth of the Yantra River on the Danube (at modern-day Krivina, Bulgaria). In AD 6, perhaps under the first prefect of *Moesiae et Treballiae*, 50,000 Getae or Dacians were settled south of the Danube in an

attempt to prevent further raids. In AD 60–68, under the emperor Nero (r. AD 54–68), the same tactic was repeated with 100,000 more Dacians transplanted into Moesia.

The province of Thracia was created in AD 46 under the emperor Claudius (r. AD 41–54) and Moesia was expanded to the Black Sea coast. Forts were built and auxiliaries and additional legions now occupied the new territory. Eventually, four legions occupied the area: *IV Scythica* was sent to the east and *V Macedonica*, *I Italica*, *VII Claudia* and *V Alaudae* remained. A fleet was also constructed for the Danube and Black Sea coast,



the *Classis (Flavia) Moesica*, based at Sextaginta Prista (modern-day Ruse, Bulgaria); it was given the additional name *Flavia* under Vespasian. This new fleet, the base of which would be moved to Noviodunum (modern-day Isaccea, Romania) by Trajan, was integral to the Dacian wars of both Domitian and Trajan. It was employed in conjunction with another Danubian fleet, the *Classis (Flavia) Pannonica* on the upper reaches of the Danube.

In Dacia, Burebista's rule was followed by that of Decaeneus, a high priest, then Cosmosicus who also combined secular and religious rule, and reigned for 40 years. He was followed by King Coyllus (Jordanes, *Get.* 73), probably to be identified with Scorylo, the *dux Dacorum* (chieftain of the Dacians) mentioned by Frontinus (*Strat.* 1.10.4). Scorylo did not take the opportunity to raid Roman territory during the civil war of AD 69, but it would seem other Dacians did, as did their neighbours and allies the Roxolani (also called the Rox-Alani to identify them more closely as Sarmatian) and Iazyges (sometimes spelt Jazyges). Jordanes tells us that the Dacians were 'bounded on the east by the Roxolani, on the west by the Iazyges, on the north by the Sarmatians and Basternae and on the south by the River Danube' (*Get.* 75). Some Dacians and the Roxolani and Iazyges took advantage of the dynastic turmoil in Rome (and the fact that the Moesian legions had been withdrawn from the border to fight in the civil war) and invaded across the Danube. Tacitus (*Hist.* 3.46) simply identifies them as Dacians and does not differentiate between Dacian, Getae or Sarmatian. Those attacks were repelled by Gaius Licinius Mucianus, perhaps with a young Domitian by his side. The subsequent death of Fonteius Agrippa fighting the Iazyges in AD 70 was often recalled when Domitian came to campaign against the Dacians, even though it occurred 15 years prior. Mucianus and Domitian defeated the incursion before moving on to Italy, securing the throne for Vespasian and then suppressing the other ongoing revolt, that of Gaius Julius Civilis in Gaul (which had begun in

ABOVE LEFT

Bust of Domitian (with later torso) now in the Musée du Louvre, Paris, France (Inv. Ma 1264) and formerly in the Albani Collection in Rome. Domitian was aged just 35 in AD 86; all of his campaigns were fought before he reached the age Trajan began his Dacian campaigns, but Domitian receives none of the credit for being a vigorous military figure even though he had extensive military experience. (Sailko/Wikimedia/CC BY 2.5)

ABOVE RIGHT

Fragment of a monumental statue of a Dacian *tarabostes* now a bust in the State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg, Russia (inv. A 427). We can mark the differences in hair and beard even if the Dacian cap is common to nearly all such busts. (George Shuklin/Wikimedia/CC BY-SA 2.5)

Bronze military diploma dated to AD 80 from Carnuntum for soldiers from the *cohors I Montanorum*, an auxiliary unit that served on the Danube frontier throughout the late 1st century AD and into the 2nd. Originally in Pannonia, the cohort was involved in the construction of the fort at Klosterneuburg, Austria (now located under the monastery), on the *Limes Pannonicus* to counter attacks across the Danube. By AD 96 it was stationed in Moesia Superior and probably served in Trajan's campaigns and was then part of the garrison of newly conquered Dacia (AE 1990, 860; CIL 16.163). *Montanorum* translates as 'mountain dwellers' and such men would have had the skills necessary for the kind of campaigns Trajan (and other commanders) needed to wage. The Roman Army would take advantage of the relevant background of auxiliary units especially. Trajan went on to take the unit on his Parthian campaign in AD 115. Roman military diplomas give us amazingly intricate detail of units' movements and involvement in military campaigns, data missing from our literary sources. The earliest to survive is from AD 52 and the latest from AD 284; over 800 have been found, most fragmentary. Not all have been published, but they provide rare and sometimes unique insights that add greatly to our knowledge of the Roman Army. (MatthiasKabel/Wikimedia/CC BY-SA 3.0)

AD 68), and Germania Inferior and Superior (known as the Batavian Revolt or the Civilis revolt).

After securing his imperial position, the emperor Vespasian (r. AD 69–79) arrived in Italy in September AD 70. He then reorganized the Danubian frontier – it was under him c.AD 75 that the Moesian and Pannonian fleets gained the epithet *Flavia* – and began building several new fortifications, basing legions at Carnuntum and Vindobona (modern-day Vienna, Austria). Domitian's elder brother Titus (r. AD 79–81) and then Domitian himself continued this policy and Domitian may have been responsible for the increased presence and status of the Danubian fleets; something with which later sources are unwilling to credit him. Although it had seldom been the focus of Rome's efforts, Dacia had long been on Rome's 'radar' as a potential place of conflict and future conquest. The Flavian activities on the Danube showed that the Romans were aware of it as a potential powder keg and, once other conquests were complete (such as in Britain), they probably intended to launch a campaign of further conquest.

This all set the scene for the war that would erupt in AD 85. That year, the Dacian king Duras, who had succeeded Scorylo, invaded Moesia, crossing the Danube and ravaging the Roman province, probably taking advantage of a Rome distracted by ongoing campaigns against the Chatti in Germany (AD 82–84) and in Britain (Agricola's battle of Mons Graupius). Moesia's governor, Gaius Oppius Sabinus, fell fighting the Dacians in the winter of AD 85 or in early AD 86. Oltean (2014: 34) thinks the fight may have taken place near Adamclisi. Jordanes tells us (*Get.* 76) that Oppius Sabinus had become governor after Fonteius Agrippa and that the Dacians cut off his head – a practice we see on Trajan's Column.

The commander of Duras' armies was one Diurpaneus (or Dorpaneus) – Jordanes tells us (*Get.* 76) that 'Dorpaneus held command over the [Dacians]' (Jordanes uses the term 'Goths') – and he, it has been argued, was one and the same man who fought Trajan 20 years later: Decebalus. The scene was





therefore set for the final showdown between Rome and Dacia; but it would take 20 years to play out. It was possibly Decebalus who introduced aspects of Greek and Roman culture into Dacian life, especially military practices. Cassius Dio tells us that Decebalus, whom he calls king (there is no Duras in Dio's account), at this point was 'making overtures to Domitian, promising him peace' (*RH* 67.6.5) before the response was sent. This was perhaps in light of the forces being gathered by Domitian for the expedition, which must have taken some time. Learning that an expedition was being sent, Decebalus made another peace offer to Domitian, but it was insulting: 'every Roman should elect to pay two obols to Decebalus each year; otherwise, he declared, he would make war and inflict great ills upon the Romans' (Dio, *RH* 67.6.5).

Domitian, with his Praetorian Prefect, Cornelius Fuscus, led the response, but Domitian surrounded himself with several other men of military experience. Jordanes tells us that 'Domitian hastened with all his might to Illyricum, bringing with him the troops of almost the entire empire' (*Get.* 77). Cassius Dio calls Decebalus a master of war who 'showed himself as a worthy antagonist of the Romans for a long time' (*RH* 67.6.1). This picture is complicated by the fact that Domitian is derided as a tyrant in the extant sources (which are relatively paltry) and his advisors are likewise abused. Any mention of his involvement personally in any campaign throughout his career is therefore rejected and dismissed. It should be pointed out that one of the roles of the Praetorian Guard was to accompany the emperor on campaign, as they would under Trajan and during subsequent campaigns. It is, therefore, highly likely that Domitian was indeed present if the Praetorian Guard was despatched; and it is therefore highly likely that Domitian was with the army when Fuscus was sent ahead – there would be little reason for the Praetorian Prefect to be there if he was not. It may have been Domitian who bridged the Danube, but his role is often denigrated. Dio summarizes his participation thus:

Domitian, then, made an expedition against this people, but did not take an active part in the conflict. Instead, he remained in one of the cities of Moesia, indulging in riotous living, as was his wont. For he was not only indolent of body and timorous of spirit, but also most profligate and lewd towards women and boys alike. He therefore sent others to conduct the war and for the most part got the worst of it. (*RH* 67.6.3)

A Roman Pompeii *gladius* and *pugio* with fragments of their scabbards – with bone handles, iron blades and bronze fittings. The Pompeii *gladius* was the most popular example, and the shortest of all the *gladius* types with a blade length of 49cm. Named after four examples found in Pompeii (as the one here – now in the Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli), the type became popular in the last quarter of the 1st century AD, corresponding with Domitian's Dacian campaign in particular; it continued in use into the 2nd century. (Jerónimo Roure Pérez/Wikimedia/CC BY-SA 4.0)

Domitian's Dacian Expedition, AD 86

Although we do not know the location of Fuscus' defeat, I have argued that it was an ambush in the mountain passes, somewhere east of modern-day Obreja, Romania – the pass leading to the location of Tapae (near modern-day Zeicani, Romania).

Next, we can apply Josephus' description of the marching order for Vespasian's force leaving Ptolemais (modern-day Acre, Israel) in AD 67. This consisted of the lightly armed troops and archers in advance to 'repel any sudden incursions of the enemy and to explore suspected woodland suited for the concealment of ambuscades' (*Jewish War* 3.6.2). Given that Fuscus seems to have walked straight into a Dacian ambush, we can probably suggest that he had no such screen or that, despite his experience, he did not use any of his troops in such a role (or that they failed in their duty). Josephus next tells us (*JW* 3.6.2) that these light troops were followed by a contingent of heavy infantry and cavalry, then ten men from each century with the duty of laying out the camp. Then came the pioneers to clear any obstacles followed by the general's baggage with an escort. The general and his bodyguard of picked infantry and cavalry followed next, followed by the legionary cavalry and then the mules with the siege engines.

This order suggests a doctrine and so, even on a smaller scale, we might assume Fuscus' force followed the same procedure: scouts (if there were any), then a vanguard of cavalry and legionaries (**A**), followed by the men to set up the camp (**B**), the pioneers (**C**) and the baggage (**D**). Fuscus was probably surrounded by men of the Praetorian Guard cavalry as his bodyguard. He might have expected to undertake siege works, but it is more likely they were with the main army and that his force was more of a 'flying column'. According to Josephus (*JW* 3.6.2), following the siege equipment came the high-ranking officers, namely legates, tribunes and prefects: each legion had one *legatus* and five tribunes. In this group (**E**) were also the prefects of the auxiliary cohorts, but for Fuscus we do not have their number. They too were accompanied by a picked escort and were followed by the military standards (**F**); each century had its own *signa* (so 59 per legion) and the legion had its single *aquila* or eagle. There was probably one *signa* per cohort of the Praetorian Guard, if not others for the centuries of

each cohort too. Regardless of whether we consider that Fuscus lost a legionary or a Praetorian Guard standard, it would have been here that it was stationed on the march. Perhaps these were targeted.

Following the standards were the musicians (**G**). Each legion had three kinds of instruments: the *tuba*, the *cornu* and the *buccina*, the players of which were the *tubicines*, the *cornicines*, and the *buccinators*. There were 36 or 38 *tubicines* per legion and the *cornicen* marched at the front of each century (so, again, 59 per legion). The *buccina* was used to announce the night watch, but it is unclear how many were attached to each legion.

Then, and only then, came the main body (**H**) of the legion – according to Josephus (*JW* 3.6.2), six abreast. The centurions marched with their men. (Arrian later states (*Ektaxis* 4) that his legions marched four abreast in AD 137 and had horsemen on the flanks of the legions to protect them.) If Fuscus' expedition contained only a single legion we can expect it to have marched here, with the Praetorian Guard cohorts probably taking up the places of the troops at the front and the bodyguards. The legion was followed by the servants and remaining baggage on mules (**I**). Next came any remaining auxiliary cohorts (**J**) – Josephus calls them 'mercenaries' (*JW* 3.6.2) – and then a rearguard (**K**) of light and heavy infantry and 'a considerable body of cavalry' (*JW* 3.6.2). Despite the smaller scale of his force in comparison to Vespasian's in AD 67, Fuscus would have had all the same types of troops even though we do not have the details of his exact auxiliary contingent or his cavalry.

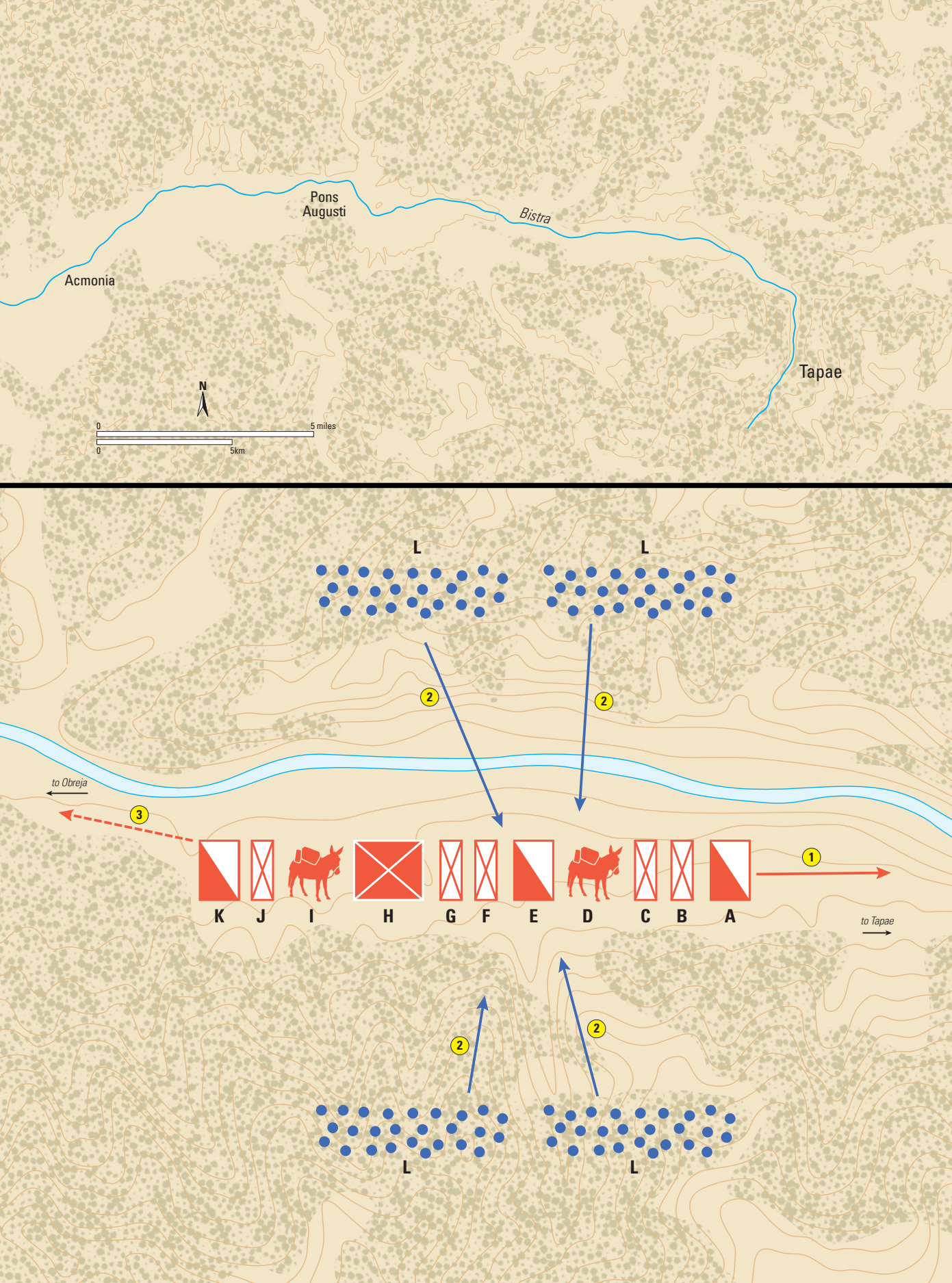
When this force was suitably advanced in the mountain pass (**1**), the Dacians (**L**) launched their attack (**2**), probably from uphill on either side of the Romans, isolating and destroying their forces. We know Fuscus was killed; the attack probably centred on him and the other officers as well as the standards, which were carried separately from the main force. In all probability, the battle was over quickly. If Fuscus and the other officers were attacked and defeated, the men at the rear of the column may have beat a retreat (**3**); we know there were survivors from a brief sentence in Cassius Dio (*RH* 67.6.6). The loss of the legionary standard may have meant the legion was disbanded despite there being survivors.

Battlefield environment

We do not know where the destruction of the forces under Fuscus took place; Jordanes tells us that Domitian 'sent Fuscus before him as a general with picked soldiers' (*Get.* 77), but that 'the [Dacians] were on the alert. They took up arms and presently overwhelmed the Romans in the first encounter' (*Get.* 78). It would seem most likely that the Romans, marching in unfamiliar territory, were ambushed and the best scenario for such an ambush is in the passes near where the battle of Tapae was later fought – there the Dacians could attack a vulnerable Roman marching column by launching attacks from

uphill down onto the column, which was necessarily narrow as they negotiated the mountain passes. Before those passes, the terrain favoured a set-piece battle where there was room for the Romans to deploy their battle line. As such we might see Fuscus hastening forward and being surprised in the first mountain pass where a Dacian ambush could be sprung.

Although not mentioned, it is possible that Fuscus did not send out scouts to reconnoitre ahead on his march or that, if local guides were used, they were, in fact, in league with the Dacians and misled the Romans about the route of their march.



INTO COMBAT

It is supremely difficult to reconstruct a battle for which the sources are lost or which were deliberately destroyed in antiquity. We might even surmise that had Tacitus' account of Domitian's campaigns survived, they would have been cast in a strongly negative light, based on his surviving portrait of the emperor. Had Tacitus' account survived, therefore, we might be no better informed than we are. Tacitus' and others' portraits, such as Juvenal's, do not really give a true picture (although they have been used as such). That said, there are some surviving glimpses that are not derogatory towards the campaigns – those in Frontinus, Jordanes and some other scattered fragments such as references to Domitian's own epic poem (which, understandably, may itself be considered unreliable). There are other clues we can use as well, such as the records of the marching order of Roman legions, using Josephus and Arrian whose accounts bracket chronologically both Domitian's and Trajan's campaigns where we do not have any specific information.

Reconstructing any of Domitian's campaigns is therefore extremely difficult; our sources are very poor and many of them, both ancient and modern, are more intent on deriding Domitian than on giving their readers a clear picture of what occurred. Our best summary of the war comes in the epitome of Cassius Dio (*RH* 67.6.1–7.2) although it is still a dissatisfying picture. Jordanes' *Getica*, however, provides us with a great deal of useful information – and his account survives where others do not. After dealing with the reign of Tiberius, Jordanes digresses to explore the Dacians, telling us they occupied the land that the Gepidae did in his day. The 'country lies across the Danube in sight of Moesia, and is surrounded by a crown of mountains. It has only two ways of access, one by way of Boutae and the other by Tapae' (*Get.* 74). We can see, therefore, why both Domitian's and Trajan's campaigns involved battles at Tapae; it is even possible that the site of Fuscus' defeat was also near this route into the Dacian heartland. After this introduction, and another digression on the Danube itself, Jordanes begins his account with the reign of Domitian.

Jordanes tells us that it was 'through fear of [Domitian's] avarice' (*Get.* 76) that the Dacians broke the truce they had long observed under previous emperors. He does, at this time, however, call them Goths although it is clear he is discussing the Dacians:

They laid waste the bank of the Danube, so long held by the Roman Empire, and slew the soldiers and their generals. Oppius Savinus was then governor of the province, after [Fonteius] Agrippa, while Dorpaneus held command over the Goths. Thereupon the Goths made war and conquered the Romans, cut off the head of Oppius Savinus and invaded and boldly plundered many castles and cities [*multa castella et civitates*] belonging to the emperor. (*Get.* 76)

The text uses 'Oppius Savinus', but it is clear Oppius Sabinus is meant.

Jordanes' account (*Get.* 77–78) tells us that in AD 86, Cornelius Fuscus crossed the Danube ahead of the main force commanded by Domitian, which traversed the river using a bridge of boats. Fuscus was sent as a general with a specifically picked force (*ductore Fusco praelato cum lectissimis viris*); we are not

given details of the composition of this force, however. There is debate about whether the forces that were ambushed (and lost by Fuscus) were a legion, *legio V Alaudae* or *XXI Rapax*, the Praetorian Guard (because he was their Prefect), or another force. Jordanes' *lectissimis* might even suggest a force made up of various vexillations. Some argue that *V Alaudae* had been destroyed earlier, in AD 70, during the Batavian Revolt, during which it had been besieged at Xanten, but Cassius Dio later mentions (*RH* 68.9.3) a standard lost under Fuscus and recovered by Trajan. This could be the Praetorian Guard standard or a legionary one; the latter is, perhaps, most likely. Dio tells us that it was a 'large' force (*RH* 67.6.5).

The forces led by Fuscus and Domitian, possibly based at Naissus (modern-day Niš, Serbia) or perhaps Scupi (near modern-day Skopje, North Macedonia), included at least five legions including *IV Flavia* from Dalmatia, *VII Claudia Pia Fidelis*, *V Alaudae* and *I* and *II Adiutrix*. Alternatively, they may have crossed at Viminacium, as Trajan would subsequently. Other measures were taken, too; Moesia was divided into Moesia Superior and Moesia Inferior and the area around Sirmium was attached to Moesia Secunda (from Pannonia). Crook points out (1955: 51) that Fuscus was the first Praetorian Prefect to be given sole command of a campaign.

Jordanes' passage may give us more clues. We are told that Fuscus' picked force was sent ahead and that 'then joining boats together like a bridge, he made his soldiers cross the river Danube above the army of Dorpaneus. But the Goths were on the alert. They took up arms and presently overwhelmed the Romans in the first encounter' (*Get.* 77–78). This may tell us that it was in fact Domitian who bridged the Danube after he had sent Fuscus across; perhaps Fuscus was especially vulnerable because he and his force were alone in enemy territory. Cassius Dio at this point names Decebalus as the leader of the Dacians and tells us that he was a man who understood warfare, a master of ambush and 'when to attack and chose the right moment to retreat' (*RH* 67.6.1). He is also called a master of pitched battles but it would seem that the best scenario for a battle with Fuscus is that the latter was lured into an ambush in which his force was all but destroyed.

Something should be said about the bridging of the Danube. Although bridges of boats had been in use since the 5th century BC (Herodotus, *Histories* 7.36.1–5) and were also used by Alexander (Arrian, *Anabasis* 3.7, 3.18; Diodorus, *Historical Library* 17.86.3), the Roman method seems to have been to use fords, swim, use boats, or, later, follow the model of Julius Caesar to construct a permanent wooden bridge (*Gallie War* 4.17–19 & 6.6, 9, 29, 35). According to Jordanes, however, Domitian was the first Roman commander to bridge the Danube using a bridge of boats – Trajan would later copy this method, as would Marcus Aurelius – in what may have been another precedent set by Domitian and subsequently suppressed, forgotten or obliterated. Trajan's building of a permanent stone bridge after AD 102 may also have been a way of surpassing Domitian.

Again, Jordanes only tells us that the Dacians 'overwhelmed the Romans in the first encounter. They slew Fuscus, the commander, and plundered the soldiers camp of its treasure' (*Get.* 78). This might suggest a pitched battle in which Dacian numbers overwhelmed the Roman contingent, as it was not Domitian's entire force. We also know, however, that certain Dacian leaders



A bronze *aes* of the emperor Claudius (r. AD 41–54) from Berytus (modern-day Beirut, Lebanon) with two legionary *aquilae* of *legio VIII Augusta* and *legio V Alaudae* (*RPC* 4547; Rouvier, 509; *SNG*, Copenhagen 94; *BMC* 75–76). Unfortunately, the surviving inscriptions of *V Alaudae* and the eight attested members of the legion throughout its history give no clue as to when the legion was destroyed. The latest epigraphic inscriptions (to several tribunes) date from c.AD 65 on the Rhine (*AE* 1955: 168; *CIL* 11.5210; *CIL* 11.5211). Tacitus mentions (*Histories* 1.7, 3.14) the *legati* of the legion in AD 68/69 and 69/70 (Cornelius Aquinus and Fabius Fabullus respectively. Unfortunately, Tacitus' *Histories* break off in AD 70 (at 5.26), and we are denied anything more from him. In the extant *Histories*, however, Tacitus shows himself to be virulently opposed to Domitian and biased against that emperor and anything he may have achieved. (www.cngcoins.com/Wikimedia/ CC BY-SA 2.5)

OPPOSITE

The tombstone of the centurion Titus Calidius Severus (*CIL* 3.11213) from Carnuntum, Austria, who must have been serving at the time of both Domitian's and Trajan's Dacian wars. He began his career as an ordinary *eques* (trooper) in *cohors I Alpinorum* (an auxiliary cohort), a unit recruited from the mountainous provinces of Tres Alpes – the three small provinces in the north of Italy: the Alpes Graiae, Alpes Cottiae and Alpes Maritimae – Noricum and Raetia. He rose to be an *optio* in the cohort and must have served for 25 years, after which, as a citizen, he re-enlisted in a legion, *XV Apollinaris*, serving as a centurion of its cavalry force for nine years. The tombstone must date to before AD 117 when *XV Apollinaris* was shifted from Carnuntum to the east, placing the beginning of his military service in AD 83 at the earliest. Notionally composed of 480 infantry and 120 cavalry, *cohors I Alpinorum equitata* spent the period from AD 80 based in Pannonia and, as such, may well have provided men for both Domitian's and Trajan's campaigns. Calidius died at the age of 58 in Carnuntum, where he must have been based from AD 108 at the earliest, but his tombstone attests to the chain or scale armour, transverse-crest helmet and decorated greaves of the centurion as well as his horse and accoutrements (it is led by an equerry, probably his own slave). (MatthiasKabel/Wikimedia/CC BY 2.5)

had refrained from joining Dorpaneus/Decebalus (but would do so after the victory). We can envisage more detail too from Jordanes' brief entry – the ambush may have taken place soon after the Romans set out in the morning, when their camp was able to be plundered. The plundering of the camp might also support a pitched battle, however. On balance, an ambush seems a better scenario and fits with Dio's summary of Decebalus' character.

Only two authors from the entire Principate mention a marching order of the Roman legions – Flavius Josephus, describing the events of AD 67–70 (although writing in the mid-AD 70s or later), and Flavius Arrian, writing c.AD 137 – thus bracketing the period we are examining. As such, it seems most likely that Josephus' order of march more closely reflects that used under Domitian; the order he describes is that of Domitian's father and brother, and Domitian was present on those campaigns. Josephus wrote his description only a decade before Domitian's Dacian campaign and it therefore seems reasonable to use that marching order (in the face of a lack of other information) for Fuscus' marching order. We can therefore apply Josephus' description (*JW* 3.6.2 & 5.2.1) to Fuscus' column when he was attacked c.AD 86 and lost the standard (of either the Praetorian Guard or a legion, or both).

The size of Fuscus' force is, as we have seen, a matter of debate and Josephus describes a much larger one consisting of three legions (16,000 infantry) and a large force of additional cohorts (some 23 of them of different strengths – 18,000 additional infantry) as well as 2,000 cavalry plus five *alae* of cavalry from Syria. Allies provided more auxiliary troops: 11,000 archers and 4,000 cavalry (*JW* 3.4.2). Fuscus had nowhere near so many men but may have had a mix of troops: Praetorian Guardsmen (8,000 men) and a single legion (5,280 men) with, probably, an equal number of auxiliary troops, as was usual. The *auxilia* included perhaps 20 infantry *cohortes* (9,600 men) and eight *alae* (3,840–4,096 men) – or fewer units if the auxiliaries were *milliaria* – and some additional auxiliary cavalry *alae*. This results in an overall strength of up to 26,000 men using maximum strengths – and that is if the entire Praetorian Guard was with Fuscus, which seems unlikely. If it was only five cohorts or half the Praetorian Guard with him (4,000 men), then he probably had, at most, 18,000 men in total. This was still a significant force, however.

If we apply the conventions and doctrine that seem apparent in Josephus' description of the legionary marching order, we can probably use it to envisage both Fuscus' and Trajan's marching order some 20 years later. Several scenes on Trajan's Column support such an idea, such as the massed standards around the *aquila*. There was no great reform of the Roman Army between Domitian's and Trajan's reigns, despite the raising of two new legions, whereas there were reforms later (the marching order described by Arrian in the *Ektaxis* reflects a slightly different practice). As such, the marching order Josephus describes was probably able to be applied in the same manner to marching columns large or small.

Applying Josephus' marching order, therefore, we get first an advance force of scouts. Vespasian 'ordered those auxiliaries which were lightly armed, and the archers to march first, that they might prevent any sudden insults from the enemy, and might search out the woods that looked suspiciously, and were capable of ambushes' (*JW* 3.6.2). Given the successful ambush of Fuscus, however, scouts may not have been in use or they did not perform their role

effectively. Next came a contingent of heavy infantry (Praetorians or legionaries) and cavalry, then a contingent of ten men from each century with the duty of laying out the camp (so with only one legion, approximately 600 men). Then came the pioneers and the commander's baggage. Next came the commander with his bodyguard of cavalry and infantry; in Fuscus' case, probably Praetorians. Next came the rest of the cavalry and any siege equipment (Fuscus may have had some of the latter as we are later told it was recovered with the lost standard). Then came the other officers: the *legatus* and the five tribunes of the legion, with a picked escort. These were followed by the military standards – the legionary *aquila* carried by the first century of the first cohort and the 59 *signa* of the other centuries of the legion. There may have been one *signum* per cohort of the Praetorian Guard, if not more; one per century would mean they had many more (perhaps one for each of the six centuries of each cohort). These were followed by the musicians (perhaps 100 men for Fuscus) and then the remaining men of the legion, according to Josephus, marching six abreast; Arrian (*Ekt.* 4), covering a later period, has only four marching abreast. Then came the servants and remaining baggage on mules, followed by any remaining auxiliary cohorts and then a rearguard of light and heavy infantry and cavalry.

Given the smaller numbers of Fuscus' force, the Dacian ambush seems to have targeted at least him and his bodyguard and the part of the column where the legionary standards were stationed. It could have been a wider, larger ambush, but there were Roman survivors who fled back to the main army crossing the Danube; logically those at the rear of the column, who would have fled past the remains of their camp. The number of Romans targeted would still have been significant, including the vanguard, the bodyguard of Fuscus and his other officers, the pioneers, musicians, the 600 men for laying out the camp, and any scouts.

Based on Jordanes' account, it is a reasonable assumption that the reason for Fuscus' defeat is that he was ambushed while on the march; something he did not forestall by the effective use of scouts. As such, we can envisage the march of his force, consisting of several Praetorian Guard cohorts and a legion marching in the manner described by Josephus. We may similarly imagine that the Dacian ambush attacked the centre of the march, where the commanders and standards were – they would, presumably, have been a magnet for attack and the Dacians would have known their significance, especially the *aquila*.

Jordanes tells us that after the defeat the Dacians touted their 'great victory' (*Get.* 78) and used it to summon more Dacian leaders who had initially been reluctant to join their cause. The victors also proclaimed that those they had defeated were 'not mere men, but demigods' (*Get.* 78). This probably reveals the respect that the Dacians usually had for the Roman armed forces and the might of the empire – not that those factors prevented them from raiding across the Danube into Moesia. It is a point that also distracts Jordanes from his story, for he then digresses into the history and genealogy of Dacian heroes and leaders. When he returns to his narrative (*Get.* 82), he leaps forward in time to the emperor Maximinus Thrax (r. AD 235–38) in the 3rd century AD



and then backtracks to the emperor Septimius Severus (r. AD 193–211). He does not, however, at any point explore Trajan's campaigns. As such, we have a source that highlights Domitian's campaign but not Trajan's. That said, Domitian's campaign (according to Jordanes) ended in the triumph of the Dacians against Fuscus; but there is clearly much left out, for Jordanes does not record the eventual victory of Domitian and the subsequent peace.

We do not know the scale of the defeat, although near the Tropaeum Traiani monument commemorating Trajan's victory in Moesia (close to the village of Adamclisi, Romania) is an altar with 3,800 names of Roman casualties. This list has been dated to the defeat suffered either by Oppius Sabinus or Cornelius Fuscus. Given the relatively large number of names, it is a good candidate to record the men lost under Fuscus; and given its location, Trajan's siting of his own victory monument close by may have been intended to obliterate not only the defeat but the memory of Domitian's (by comparison, paltry and ineffective) efforts.

Although there were Roman survivors, the humiliating defeat meant that the legion was disbanded. As we have seen, *V Alaudae* is a good candidate, although there are arguments it had already been lost. McDonnell-Staff (2012: 27) considers that the legion lost under Domitian in Dacia was destroyed under Oppius Sabinus (not Fuscus) and that, therefore, the standard lost by Fuscus was a Praetorian Guard one. These were distinct from the legionary standards, as they had the bust of the emperor on them. Most commentators, however, consider that a legion *was* lost by Fuscus, either *V Alaudae* or *XXI Rapax*. The details in Jordanes are more than we get anywhere else – no other source tells us of the many forts and cities taken. Another legion was lost in AD 92 (both legions are again candidates). If it was a Praetorian Guard standard that was lost by Fuscus, those men would have been replaced from the ranks (and the ten cohorts of the Praetorian Guard maintained).

Suetonius tells us (*Domitian* 6; also Eutropius, *Breviarium* 7.23.4) of the loss of a legion in Sarmatia in AD 92, but he does not reveal which one was lost. Likewise, he does not tell us of a lost legion under Fuscus. Parker (1928: 110) therefore thought *V Alaudae* was lost in Sarmatia in AD 92 (rather than AD 70) and questioned whether a whole legion was lost in AD 86/87 at all. According to an interpretation of Cassius Dio, Trajan recovered the *aquila* lost by Fuscus: 'Trajan seized some fortified mountains and on them found the arms and the captured engines, as well as the standard which had been taken in the time of Fuscus' (*RH* 68.9.3). This interprets the term *to te semeion* ('sign' or 'emblem') as a reference to the *aquila* standard. Parker thought two legions could have been lost by Domitian (*V Alaudae* and *XXI Rapax*), one with Fuscus and the other in Sarmatia, and hence Trajan raised two new legions. Bennett (1997: 30–31), however, contended that it was *XXI Rapax* that was lost during operations against the Sarmatians in AD 92. *XXI Rapax* had been based at Mogontiacum (modern-day Mainz, Germany) and had probably supported the revolt of Saturninus in AD 89 (there is no concrete record of this, however). Perhaps, then, *V Alaudae* was lost in AD 86 and *XXI Rapax* in AD 92. Usually, the loss of a legion's *aquila* spelt the disbandment of a legion (as it did for Varus' three legions), but this was not a universal rule; *legio XII Fulminata* lost its *aquila* in AD 66 (Tacitus, *Ann.* 2.17.12), but remained constituted as a legion. Another possibility is

that Fuscus, as Praetorian Prefect, commanded the Praetorian Guard and lost their *aquila*. The Praetorian Guard, however, remained in place.

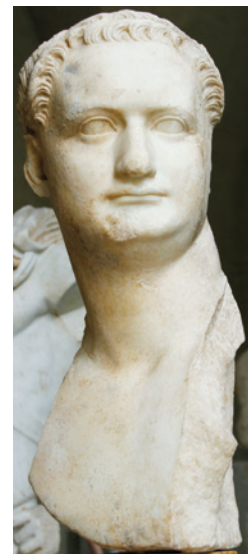
In a fragmentary sentence, Cassius Dio tells us that the soldiers (the survivors?) ‘who had made the campaign with Fuscus asked Domitian to lead them’ (*RH* 67.6.6). This implies that there were Roman survivors. Fuscus had been sent ahead and crossed the Danube, but was surprised and utterly defeated by the Dacians. Domitian’s campaigns would, therefore, require further response and it is probable that Domitian again led the campaign later in AD 86 personally with his commanders of the newly divided Moesia: Cornelius Nigrinus in Moesia Inferior and Funisulanus Vettonianus (succeeded by Tettius Julianus) in Moesia Superior. Julianus would achieve victory in late AD 88 at Tapae with at least four legions: *III Scythica*, *V Macedonica*, *II Adiutrix* and *VII Claudia*.

Any thought Domitian had of visiting the frontier (perhaps to take credit) was negated by the revolt of Antonius Saturninus, governor of Germania Superior, which broke out on 1 January AD 89, and other crises. Cassius Dio tells us (*RH* 67.6.4) that Domitian blamed his defeats in Dacia and elsewhere on his subordinates and that, having lost another war against the Quadi and Marcomanni in AD 86/87, soon accepted the overtures of peace from Decebalus (*RH* 67.7.2). Dio derides the peace, but later, after a long passage abusing Domitian, he does inform us that the campaign was successfully concluded by Tettius Julianus who ‘encountered the enemy at Tapae, and slew great numbers of them’ (*RH* 67.10.1). Despite crediting reforms to Julianus (not Domitian), Dio does concede that that Domitian increased the pay of the legions ‘perhaps on account of this victory, commanding that four hundred sesterces should be given to each man in place of the three hundred that he had been receiving’ (*RH* 67.3.5). Even this reform is viewed as a negative one, however, because it was enacted by Domitian when it was probably necessary and a positive measure. Domitian implemented other reforms and increased the number of legions. He raised a new legion, initially called *legio I Flavia* (Dio, *RH* 55.24.3) but then renamed *Minervia* after Domitian’s favourite deity. The legion used the ram, Minerva’s sacred animal, as its emblem. It was once thought this legion was instituted in AD 87 after the loss of Fuscus’ force, but raising it for Frontinus’ war in Germania in AD 82 seems more likely.

One anecdote recorded by Cassius Dio (*RH* 67.10.3) suggests that Decebalus put armour on cut-down tree trunks because he was afraid the Romans would take his royal residence (at Sarmizegetusa) and sought to give the impression that his army was stronger than it was. This seems to imply greater Roman success than the derision of Domitian suggests. There are other sources that hint at greater imperial success, but they are difficult to incorporate into a coherent narrative.

In AD 86, Domitian did claim victory, however, and he celebrated a triumph at some time between March and May – before the successful end of the campaign. It was, however, a triumph derided in multiple sources (Dio, *RH* 67.7.4, 67.9.6; Suetonius, *Dom.* 13.3; Tacitus, *Agr.* 39.1–3, 41; Pliny, *Panegyricus* 16.3; Orosius, *Seven Books of History Against the Pagans* 7.10.4). This is unfair. Moesia had been secured and reorganized and the Dacians had retreated across the Danube – more than enough to qualify for a triumph. Frontinus in the *Expositio et Ratio Omnium Formarum* (in Campbell 2000)

A bust of the emperor Domitian in the Glyptothek, Munich (on loan from the Capitoline Museum in Rome). Despite increasing his soldiers’ pay and enjoying ongoing popularity, Domitian gets very little credit as a commander or as an emperor. When Saturninus revolted in early AD 89, it quickly became apparent that Domitian was popular with his other armies and their commanders. Nevertheless, after the revolt Domitian’s behaviour seems to have deteriorated to the point that anything he may have achieved in his reign is ignored, derided or credited to someone else by nearly all subsequent historians. (José Luiz Bernardes Ribeiro/ Wikimedia/CC BY-SA 4.0)



A Roman helmet of the Weisenau type now in the Museo Arqueológico Nacional de España, Madrid, Spain (Inv. 2002/125/3). It has a hemispherical skull and almost flat neck guard and hinged cheek-pieces. The decorative bronze bosses are typical of this type. This was once referred to as the Imperial Gallic G type (H. Russell Robinson's categorization) and, along with types Imperial Gallic H, I, and J, they were all similar with small alterations (such as the angle of the neck guard – from flat to almost 50 degrees). This was the most common legionary helmet from the mid-1st century AD onwards and the types continued in use into the 2nd century AD. (manuel m. v./Wikimedia/CC BY 2.0)



offers a far more positive picture, claiming that the triumph secured northern Europe for Rome. The later campaign into Dacia in AD 88 was important, but by AD 86 the empire was protected once more. Cassius Dio claims (*RH* 67.8.1) that Domitian took multiple titles and filled the empire with statues of himself, paid Decebalus large sums (and promised large sums into the future) and provided ‘artisans of every trade pertaining to both peace and war’ (*RH* 67.7.4). This has been used to suggest that several Dacian innovations in fortifications and the use of Roman siege weapons came about after Domitian’s campaign. Nevertheless, at the conclusion of the war in AD 88/89, Decebalus was regarded as an ally and friend of Rome.

All Suetonius tells us is that there were ‘several battles of varying success’ (*Dom.* 6.1) before victory was achieved. The tenor of Tacitus’ (negative) account in the *Histories* is preserved in Orosius (*SBHAP* 7.10.4), which states that he would have set forth the mighty battles and losses between Fuscus and Diurpaneus had not Tacitus and others passed over the numbers of the losses in silence. Tacitus did not avoid the Teutoburg Forest disaster (*Ann.* 1.60–62), so this silence was intended to remove Domitian’s campaign from history. Despite his dismissal or silence on the campaigns elsewhere and the fact his *Histories* do not survive for them, Tacitus opens his *Histories* with a summary of the events he will cover which includes the Dacian wars of Domitian: ‘the Dacians won fame by defeats inflicted and suffered’ (1.2). The Dacian wars must have been considered important.

Elsewhere, Orosius tells us (*SBHAP* 7.10.3) that the German and Dacian wars were waged through lieutenants; both wars were equally damaging to the state and Roman armies were continually slaughtered and badly led. Probably on account of its brevity, Jerome’s *Chronicle* (*A Abr.* 2106–07) is positive – it records simply that the Dacians who were fighting against Rome were conquered and Domitian celebrated a triumph (with no verdict as to

whether or not it was a sham). Eutropius’ brief entry tells us (*Brev.* 7.23.4) that Domitian made two expeditions against the Dacians and celebrated a triumph, whereas he only celebrated (the lesser) *ovatio* for the Sarmatian campaign. Eutropius surmises: ‘He suffered many disasters however in these wars, for in Sarmatia one of his legions was cut off together with its captain, and by the Dacians Oppius Sabinus, a person of consular dignity, and Cornelius Fuscus, the prefect of the praetorian cohort, were slain, with numerous armies’ (*Brev.* 7.23.4). This suggests that two legions were



A 1st century AD Roman auxiliary cavalry helmet found in a peat bog in the 1870s at Witcham Gravel, Ely, Cambridgeshire, England, probably dating to c.AD 75. The iron core has eroded away leaving only the decorative bronze casing of the eight pieces and some traces of the tinning to give the helmet a silvered appearance. The helmet also shows signs of a crest box (20.5cm long and 2.3cm wide; probably originally of wood) riveted to the top of the helmet. No traces of the wood or the original horsehair crest itself survive. (Michel wal/ Wikimedia/CC BY-SA 3.0)

lost under Domitian, and that perhaps the new one raised was to replace one of these.

Domitian himself wrote an epic poem on his Dacian campaign – it is lost, but references to it remain (*CIL* 6.1207, first quoted by Petrarch in *De remediis utriusque fortunae* (I.114), and which Theodor Mommsen considered to relate to Domitian). Quintilian, who died c.AD 100, spoke of Domitian's poetry, writing: 'who could sing of war better than he who wages it with such skill' (*Institutio oratoria* 10.1.91); he praises Domitian's 'other virtues' (10.1.92; see also Suetonius, *Dom.* 2.2). In book 3 of Silius Italicus' *Punica* – the longest Latin poem to survive from antiquity telling the story of the Second Punic War (218–201 BC) – the author tells us of the family of Vespasian and praises Domitian as surpassing his father and brother (3.606–17). These words, like Statius' poetry, might be seen as servile and sycophantic flattery written during the reign of a tyrant, but Silius' praise of Domitian continued after his death; the deceased emperor is called the man who 'has now given peace to the world' (*Pun.* 14.686–88) and praised for ridding the empire of the crimes of provincial governors. This praise has been argued to apply to Nerva, but Domitian is more probably meant (tying this to Suetonius' picture in *Dom.* 8.1–2; see also McDermott & Orentzel 1977: 30).

Trajan's First Dacian Campaign

AD 101

This bust of Trajan (with typical hairstyle), found in Ostia in 1803, is now in the Glyptothek, Munich, Germany (Inv. 336). (Bibi Saint-Pol/Wikimedia/Public Domain)



BACKGROUND TO BATTLE

Domitian declined into tyranny and was assassinated in September AD 96 having reigned for 15 years and four days. He remained popular with the Roman Army, but the later sources mention being freed from under a great shadow. He was succeeded by the 65-year-old Marcus Cocceius Nerva, selected by the Senate to be the best candidate, and this ushered in the period of the five good emperors (ending with Marcus Aurelius). Nerva died in January AD 98 having adopted Trajan to be his successor.

As soon as he came to power in AD 98, Trajan toured the Danube and Dacian frontier, once more strengthening its defences. Three years later he decided to invade Dacia. Although he wrote it in AD 100, before the campaign, Pliny's *Panegyricus* in praise of Trajan seems to consider Trajan's planned campaign as common knowledge. Pliny looks forward to a 'real' triumph over the Dacians, not the sham of Domitian's triumph (*Pan.* 16.3) Pliny also speaks of Trajan standing on the southern bank of the Danube in winter AD 98/99 and that, if he had only crossed, a triumph would have been certain (*Pan.* 16.2).

Despite the peace that had endured since Julianus' success, Dacia and Decebalus were still regarded by the Romans as a threat and probably as unfinished business. Since the peace of Domitian, Rome probably held territory on both sides of the Danube, even if the newly controlled territory was not officially a province. Trajan's campaign seems to have been a pre-emptive strike or outright aggression – there



Tombstone of the centurion Titus Flavius Magnus from Aquincum (modern-day Budapest, Hungary; CIL 3.14349.03). He served in that office in at least four legions – *III Gallica*, *XII Fulminata*, the third legion is incomplete (we have *VII*) and the fourth is unknown. He may have served with a vexillation of *XII Fulminata* on Trajan's first Dacian campaign or his fourth legion was *II Adiutrix*, which was stationed at Aquincum from the beginning of the 2nd century AD. He is another of the wide variety of centurions of whom we know. The poet Martial mentions that his works were read by centurions on campaign during Domitian's Dacian campaigns: 'my book is worn thin by hardy centurions among the warlike standards in the Dacian snow' (*Epigrams* 11.3). One of Martial's acquaintances, the centurion Aulus Pudens, rose to the position of *primus pilus* (chief centurion; *Epigrams* 1.31 & 5.48) and aspired to become an equestrian (*Epigrams* 6.58) – a career path open for a select few prominent and successful centurions. (Bjoertvedt/Wikimedia/CC BY-SA 4.0)

does not seem to have been a specific raid or other activity that precipitated the invasion, although his tour to the frontier as soon as he came to power implies there may have been agitation on the border or raids across it. Under Trajan the road along the rocky gorges of the Danube was begun; these works were clearly to facilitate more rapid travel, probably of military personnel. A channel or canal was also built at Šip, Serbia, to allow the Danube fleet to avoid the dangerous Iron Gates and the fleet reorganized; and Trajan began strengthening the Danubian fortifications.

Technically, Dacia was an ally and friend of Rome after the peace with Domitian, which had held for ten years. It may simply be that the annuity promised in AD 88 and paid ever since rankled; Trajan may have reduced or stopped paying it altogether in AD 99. All these elements may have suggested that an invasion was coming and the memories of the defeats and humiliations suffered under Domitian needed to be redressed – Domitian's final 'victory' was seen as hollow. It may be, however, that Trajan was looking for ways to surpass Domitian. There had been little military activity under Nerva, and Dacia may have been suggested as a fertile field.

There may also have been several lessons to learn from Domitian's campaigns of which Trajan could take advantage. Several of Domitian's commanders were still alive, notably Sextus Julius Frontinus, who shared a consulship with Nerva in AD 98 and one with Trajan in AD 100. There were also veterans such as Tiberius Claudius Maximus who may have wished to avenge the defeat of Fuscus. A Dacian campaign may also have been a way for Trajan to ingratiate himself with the Roman Army and the Praetorians among whom Domitian remained popular. Philostratus, writing a life of the orator Dio Chrysostom in the late 2nd century AD, includes an anecdote that Dio Chrysostom often visited the military camps and that, when news of Domitian's assassination arrived in AD 96, he prevented the troops from mutinying by delivering an oration condemning the tyrant (*LoS* 7/488). Although the veracity of this story is doubted by Suetonius (*Dom.* 23), it does tell us of the troops' grief at Domitian's death. Trajan left Rome in March AD 101 and headed to Moesia.

Trajan's First Dacian Campaign, AD 101

Oltean (2014: 74–75) reconstructs Trajan's march as proceeding from Viminacium (near modern-day Kostolac, Serbia) to Lederata (modern-day Ram, Serbia), crossing the Danube on a bridge of boats. From there the first Roman column (1) proceeded to Flumen, Arcidava, Centum Putei, Berzobis and Aizis. The names of these last two places are provided by the fragment of Trajan's *Dacica* and may reflect the route Domitian had also taken. The places leading to (and from) them are the only logical ones. From there the march proceeded to Caput Bubali, then Tibiscum (modern-day Caransebeș, Romania). These place names are preserved on the *Tabula Peutingeriana*.

The conjectured second column (2) marched from Dierna (modern-day Orșova, Romania) or Drobeta (modern-day Drobeta-Turnu Severin, Romania) and moved along the Cerna River to Tibiscum, where it joined the first column. Oltean's

third column (3), crossing at Drobeta and marching up the Jiu River valley, may have followed the route used by one of the columns in AD 106. Other routes are possible, but all are based on modern-day conjecture. From Tibiscum the column headed up the valley of the Bistra River, past the fort of Acmonia (near modern-day Zavoi, Romania), although no fighting is recorded, and past Pons Augusti (site of a Roman fort) just south of the modern-day village of Voislova, Romania. Continuing up the pass, the Roman column came to the site of modern-day Bucova and just to the east of that village the pass narrowed. Oltean (2014: 91) identifies this point (8km west of modern-day Zeicani) as the likely place of the battle(s) of Tapae. This tallies with the location favoured by Lepper & Frere (1988: 328), although Connolly (1988b: 13) places Tapae much closer to the mouth of the pass, closer to modern-day Oțelu Roșu, Romania.

Battlefield environment

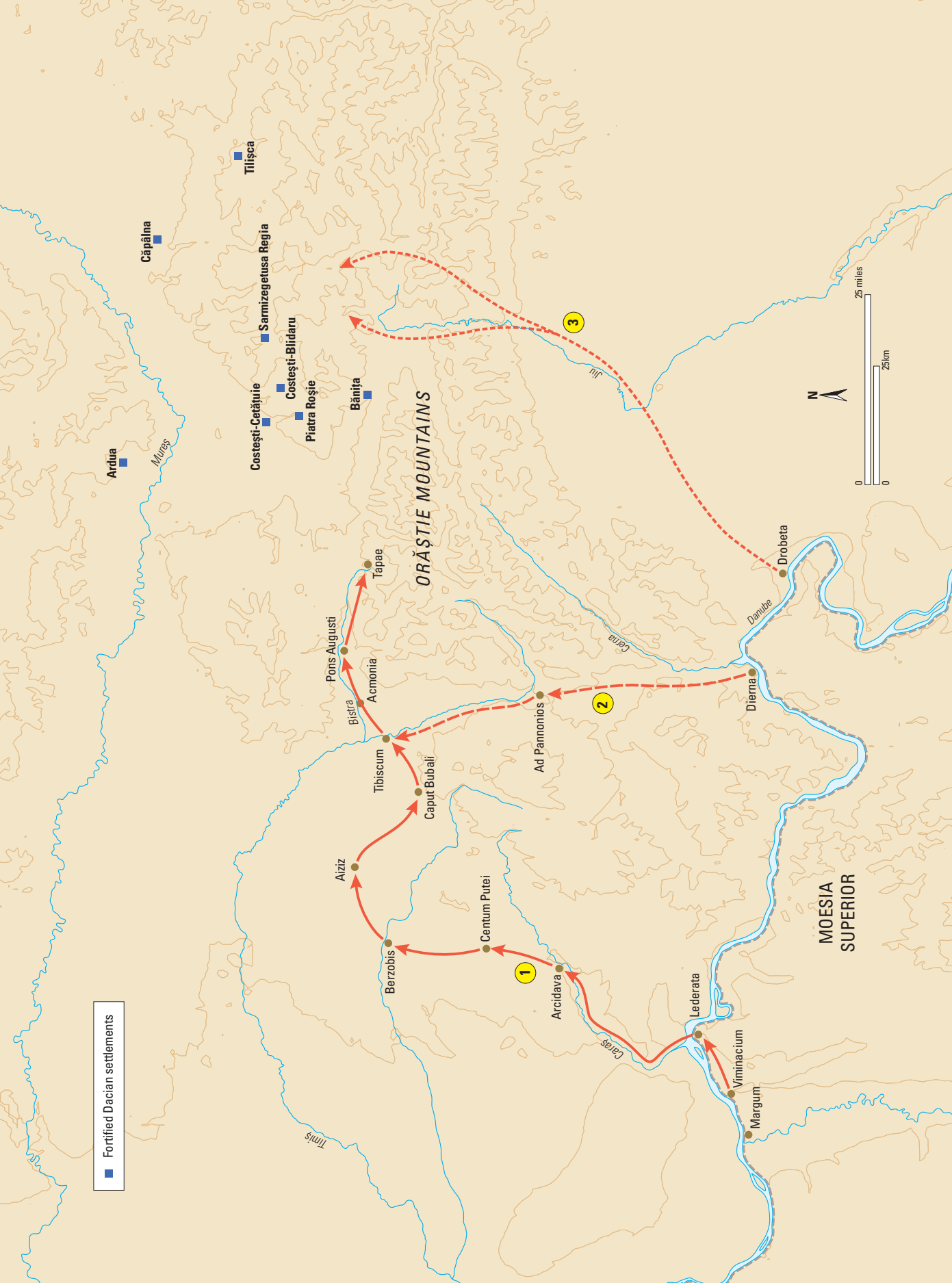
The Tapae battlefield is usually placed in the pass known as the Iron Gate of Transylvania, near Zeicani, and was probably fought somewhere between there and Glimboca, the village at the mouth of the pass further to the west. Placing the battlefield further into the pass and therefore close to Zeicani – drawing the Romans in so that, once defeated, they could be harassed as they fled through disadvantageous terrain – makes the most sense.

We do not know whether a barricade was constructed to halt the Roman advance, but the fact that several engagements were fought at Tapae suggests there was a natural place where a march could be halted and from where a Dacian ambush could

be launched just like the one that had defeated Fuscus. There does not, however, seem to have been much further speculation or work to try to identify exactly where the battle may have been other than this rough area of the pass. Oltean (2014: 91), however, makes a good argument that the site of the battle was just east of Bucova. The pass does narrow there naturally and there are traces of earthworks, although these may date from later centuries – above the pass is an 18th-century star fort and there are traces of other fortifications there from the 16th through to the 20th centuries. What the continued defence of the pass may suggest, however, is that it was always a point that could be defended, even stretching back to antiquity.

The narrowest point of Kazan Gorge of the Iron Gates on the Danube was also treacherous in the Roman era. This marked the boundary between the jurisdictions of the two Roman fleets known as the *Classis Pannonica* and the *Classis Moesica*. Located east of Orșova, Romania (the Roman *castra* of Dierna), the *Classis Moesica* patrolled beyond Drobeta as far east as far the Black Sea. (Lys3rg0/Wikimedia/Public Domain)







The tombstone of Tiberius Claudius Maximus (*AE* 1969/70: 583; *AE* 1974: 589; *AE* 1985: 721) from Philippi in Greece is remarkable in that it records the career of a soldier who served in both Domitian's Dacian war and Trajan's wars, including his subsequent Parthian War (AD 113–17). (Macedonian Heritage/Wikimedia/CC BY-SA 3.0)

INTO COMBAT

Crossing the Danube at Viminacium or slightly downstream at Lederata (modern-day Ram, Serbia) on a bridge of boats, Trajan invaded Dacia, marching at least 13 legions, vexillations from others and auxiliary troops into enemy territory. The legions included *I Minervia*, *I Italica*, *I Adiutrix*, *II Adiutrix*, *IV Macedonica*, *IV Flavia Felix*, *IV Scythica*, *V Macedonica*, *VI Ferrata*, *VII Claudia*, *X Gemina*, *X Fretensis*, *XI Claudia*, *XII Fulminata*, *XIII Gemina* and *XIV Gemina*. Trajan also raised two new legions, *XXX Ulpia* and *II Traiana*, although the establishment date for each is debated. This has also caused a controversy as to which legions had been lost. In AD 83 there were 30 legions, yet some must have been lost for Trajan to raise new legions and that total to remain the same. Both legions were likely raised by Trajan early in his principate, and probably in anticipation of his campaign in Dacia. It is possible, however, that *XXX Ulpia* was raised between his two campaigns, although it did gain the epithet *Victrix*, implying it saw combat; it could have fought only in the second campaign (*CIL* 13.1884). Parker (1928: 111–15) considers that *XXX Ulpia* was raised first (to replace *XXI Rapax*) for the initial campaign and then *II Traiana* for the second campaign.

The aforementioned list gives us 18 legions. Presumably some were full and others partial, perhaps up to the equivalent of 13 full legions. Trajan also had the Praetorian Guard with him. Overall, this was a massive force, if calculated at full strength (and assuming an equal number of auxiliaries); it would number some 68,000 legionaries and a total strength of close to 150,000 men, maybe more. It must have taken time – possibly years – to assemble, perhaps the period AD 98–101, and the Dacians must have seen or heard evidence of the build-up.

It has been argued that there were two columns of advance. Oltean (2014: 73–74) makes the case for three – one crossing at Viminacium and another at Drobeta or Dierna, which then met up with the first column at Tibiscum

Tiberius Claudius Maximus

There are many commanders of Domitian's and Trajan's armies who are passed over briefly in the scant sources. We gain much more information from inscriptions, and the tombstone of Tiberius Claudius Maximus is one fine example (*AE* 1985: 721). He is not mentioned in any literary account of either Domitian's or Trajan's campaigns, although it has been argued he is depicted on Trajan's Column in the scene showing the capture of Decebalus.

On the tombstone he erected before his death, Tiberius tells us that he served as a cavalryman (*eques*) in *legio VII Claudia Pia Fidelis* in Domitian's Dacian war, during which he was promoted several times and received rewards for his bravery. He eventually became the *legatus* of that legion and was then promoted to other positions under Trajan. Tiberius later served in Trajan's Dacian campaigns, and it was Tiberius who brought the decapitated head of Decebalus back to the emperor; this event was even

recorded on Trajan's Column. Trajan too took advantage of the experience of his veterans.

The inscription reads: 'Tiberius Claudius Maximus, veteran, arranged this memorial while he was alive. He served as trooper in *legio VII Claudia Pia Fidelis*, was made *quaestor equitum*, then *singularis* of the *legatus legionis* of the same legion, then *vexillarius* of the troopers of that unit, received awards from Emperor Domitian for bravery in the Dacian war, was made *duplicarius* in the *ala II Pannoniorum* by the Emperor Trajan and was made *explorator* in the Dacian war and twice received awards for bravery in the Dacian and the Parthian War and was made *decurio* in the same *ala* by him because he had captured Decebalus and bore his head to him in *Ranistrorum*. He received his honourable discharge as a *voluntarius* from the consular commander Terentius Scaurianus, of the army of the *Provincia Mesopotamia Nova*.'

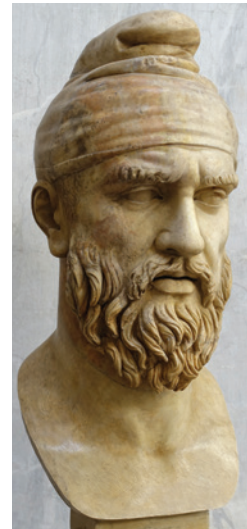
(modern-day Caransebeș, Romania), while a third column took a more easterly route. This interpretation is not based on the literary sources and the very brief coverage in Trajan's own account, however, but on reading the scenes on Trajan's Column as a narrative and the sensible idea that deploying such a large, single force would be problematic. Nevertheless, the two columns were together at Tapae.

The denigration of Domitian continues into accounts of Trajan's war:

After spending some time in Rome he made a campaign against the Dacians; for he took into account their past deeds and was grieved at the amount of money they were receiving annually, and he also observed that their power and their pride were increasing. Decebalus, learning of his advance, became frightened, since he well knew that on the former occasion it was not the Romans that he had conquered, but Domitian, whereas now he would be fighting against both Romans and Trajan, the emperor. (Dio, *RH* 68.6.1–2)

Pliny, too, never misses an opportunity to abuse and belittle Domitian (*Pan.* 11.4, 12.1, 12.2, 14.5, 20.4).

As mentioned previously, Dio of Prusa has left us the *Twelfth Discourse*, a vivid portrait of the inhabitants of Dacia based on his impressions of that region and its people in the years before Trajan's first Dacian campaign. In it, Dio characterizes the Dacians as being armed and ready for war very similar to that of Ovid, some 80 years earlier: 'one could see everywhere swords,



A Dacian bust (probably of a *tarabostes*) from the Forum of Trajan and now in the Museo Chiaramonti, Vatican Museums (inv. 2214). (Daderot/Wikimedia/Public Domain)

Decebalus

Cassius Dio's *Roman Histories* gives us a portrait of Decebalus: 'At this time the Romans became involved in a very serious war with the Dacians, whose king was then Decebalus. This man was shrewd in his understanding of warfare and shrewd also in the waging of war; he judged well when to attack and chose the right moment to retreat; he was an expert in ambushes and a master in pitched battles; and he knew not only how to follow up a victory well, but also how to manage well a defeat. Hence he showed himself a worthy antagonist of the Romans for a long time' (*RH* 67.6.1).

Bury summarized Decebalus as a 'leader of men, endowed with military genius' (1893: 407) and surmised that 'Decebalus' was in fact a title for the king named Diurpaneus. That name (or Dorpaneus) is given to us as the commander of the armies against Domitian (Jordanes, *Get.* 76–77; Orosius, *SBHAP* 7.10.4; Peter the Patrician, *History* fragment 3). Conversely, Dio names Decebalus as king of the Dacians at the time of the wars with Domitian: 'Decebalus, the king of the Dacians, was making overtures to Domitian, promising him peace; but Domitian sent Fuscus against him with a large force' (*RH* 67.6.1–5). Some would therefore make King Duras and Diurpaneus the same person; others would make Diurpaneus and Decebalus the same, where Diurpaneus/Decebalus was the general for

Duras. Zahariade calls him 'old king Diurapenus' (2012: 9) who ceded power to the younger and more capable Decebalus. Even Bury states (1893: 407) that Duras resigned the throne in Decebalus' favour. If Duras/Diurpaneus was king he was hardly old, however, having been on the throne some 15 years, succeeding Coryallus/Scorylo c.AD 69/70.

Bury goes on to discuss Decebalus' capabilities, mentioning his 'conspicuous talents' and stating that it was his intention to revive the empire of Burebista and form Dacia into a 'great military state, which might hold its own, as a power of first-rate importance, on the northern frontier of the Roman Empire' (1893: 407). Bury credits Decebalus with introducing Greek and Roman civilization into Dacia and especially learning the Roman art of war. From deserters he learned the Roman methods of entrenchment and the construction of military engines. This probably relates to the peace after Domitian's war and it may have been a part of Decebalus' negotiating position to receive instruction and expertise rather than having to rely upon deserters. He also must have had far-reaching diplomatic ties to his neighbours, the Sarmatian *azyges* and *Roxolani*, but also the *Bastarnae* and other Getic and Thracian peoples who may have coordinated their raids over the Danube with his. His diplomatic connections reached even as far as Parthia.





Crossing the Danube

Here we see Roman legionaries crossing the Danube at Viminacium (near Kostolac, Serbia) on a pontoon bridge of boats. The crossing may have been, instead, at Lederata (modern Rama, Serbia), 27km north-east; others propose several other crossings (reconstructions have two columns, even three). Much of the column having already passed, here is the main body of troops – the standards march in a body further to the front of the column. Observing the passing of the Romans (and undetected by any Roman scouts) are three Dacian warriors, two experienced fighters and a young, inexperienced *tarabostes*, keen to prove himself. Clad in tunics and cloaks and carrying *sicae* of various lengths, they will count the invading troops and report back to Decebalus the strength of the enemy they face.

The Roman legionaries are from *legio II Adiutrix*, a legion moved from Britain in AD 86/87 for Domitian's campaign, to be stationed at Aquincum (modern-day Budapest, Hungary). It also served in Trajan's campaigns. Their shields and tunics are blue, rather than the usual red (for which there is very limited evidence); the reason for blue as a colour for *II Adiutrix*'s shields and tunics is that the legion was recruited from former members of the Ravenna fleet when it formed in AD 69. The legionaries all wear *lorica segmentata* with curved rectangular *scuta* (shields) and march six abreast, as described by Josephus. They are overseen by a military *tribunus* on horseback. The men also carry their personal equipment in a bundle over their shoulders, as shown on the corresponding scene on Trajan's Column (scene IV).

The northern bank of Trajan's bridge at Drobeta (modern-day Drobeta-Turnu Severin, Romania), built in AD 102. Cassius Dio describes the bridge he admired as having 20 piers of squared stone reaching 'one hundred and fifty feet above the foundations and sixty in width'; these were spaced 'one hundred and seventy feet from one another' and connected by arches (*Roman Histories* 68.13.1–6). Dio also marvelled that the 'bridge is of no use to us; for merely the piers are standing, affording no means of crossing' (68.13.5); the roadway had been removed by Hadrian. Dio tells us (68.13.6) that Trajan built the bridge, not to facilitate an invasion necessarily but because he feared that if war was made on the Romans on the northern side of the Danube and the river was frozen, the bridge was there for imperial forces (both to reach them and for them to withdraw to safety). (Leontin I/Wikimedia/CC BY-SA 4.0)

everywhere corselets, everywhere spears, and the whole place was crowded with horses, with arms, and with armed men' (Dio Chrysostom, *TD* 12.19). This suggests that either a raid was imminent or that the Dacians knew an expedition was on its way. Nerva was still emperor in August/September AD 97 when the speech was delivered and did not die until late January AD 98; Trajan succeeded immediately, but a campaign may have already been planned or was regarded as unavoidable. What is quite odd in commentaries on this speech is that scholars write of Trajan's campaign being imminent and yet it was more than three years from the date of the speech until the expedition was launched. Perhaps an earlier expedition was planned and Nerva's death threw those plans into disarray, although the launching of a campaign only in AD 101 seems unusually delayed if it was on the cusp of being launched in mid-AD 97. Certainly, Dio writes as if a campaign was expected: 'desiring to see strong men contending for empire and power, and their opponents for freedom and native land' (*TD* 12.20).





Trajan published an account of his own campaigns in a *Dacica* (also sometimes called a *De Bello dacico* or *Commentarii de bellis Dacicis* to model the work on Julius Caesar's commentaries), but only a single sentence survives of it. The sentence – *inde Berzobim, inde Aizi processimus* – was excerpted by the 6th century AD grammarian Priscian and translates as 'from there we proceeded to Berzobim, from there to Aizi' (*Institutiones Grammaticae* 6.13). These were the forts of Bersobis (modern-day Berzovia, Romania) and Aizis (modern-day Fârluig, Romania), both of which are also listed on the Roman Dacia section of the *Tabula Peutingeriana*. The sentence does, however, suggest the eastwards advance of Trajan's campaign, Aizis being some 30km east of Bersobis (a walk of 6½ hours, although not in hostile territory and without enemy activity), and either of the routes (a southern alternative is an 8-hour walk) must pass through a range of hills. The sentence does not preserve any sense of campaign activity other than a summary of the advance. Davies (1920) sees Trajan's Column as an illustration of Trajan's *Dacica*, but it does not make it possible to identify individual legions, so is a generalized depiction full of inaccuracies. Wheeler concurs (2010: 1194), arguing that legionary and auxiliary equipment, including the standards they carried, is misrepresented on the column. Coulston (1989) has led the charge against Trajan's Column as a historical source.

We might surmise, however, that this was early in the campaign, because Bersobis is the first fort encountered leaving the plain after crossing the Danube – although heading north rather than immediately into the mountainous terrain around the Iron Gates on the Danube. As such we can perhaps surmise that, crossing at Viminacium, which had been a camp in Augustus' reign and the base of *legio VII Claudia* since at least AD 62 (and where that legion remained after having fought for Vespasian in the civil war of AD 69), Trajan's invading column would then have traversed the plain and headed towards Bersobis, perhaps not meeting any resistance because the terrain suited the Romans, before swinging east towards Aizis and then

Scene LXXII of Trajan's Column – the last battle of Trajan's first campaign. This depiction is noteworthy for the Roman *testudo* ('tortoise') formation being used to storm a Dacian stronghold. No literary account of a siege has a *testudo* being employed in such a way, but it is one of the few times on the column in which Roman legionaries are shown in combat. To the right, Trajan is once again shown the heads of Dacians killed by his auxiliaries. Presumably, these were not just any Dacians but prominent enemy leaders, their heads perhaps displayed to suggest an enemy tribe had been subdued or a mission accomplished in the reduction of a part of the enemy's strength. (Conrad Cichorius/Wikimedia/Public Domain)

towards the more mountainous terrain inland. In the Trajan fragment we are not told where the first ‘from there’ was, but it was presumably on the plain (if not Viminacium itself). We might further suggest that, given the more difficult and mountainous terrain to come further east (which included the Iron Gates and the Tapae battlefield), there was no resistance – or none worth mentioning – between Bersobis and Aizis; that would come in the more mountainous terrain ahead, terrain that favoured the Dacian defenders. We might also surmise then that progress up to that point was relatively rapid and perhaps even between the two named points.

All this, of course, tends to presuppose that the Dacians did not utilize their renowned cavalry and raiding tactics but waited in more suitable terrain to try to ambush the Romans, as they had done against Fuscus during Domitian’s reign. That in itself suggests that the Dacians (and Decebalus) acknowledged that they were no match for the Romans on open ground and in set-piece battle and were therefore more confident of success if they met the invaders on ground of the Dacians’ choosing that, while not suitable for cavalry, was, nevertheless, better suited to their defence. The early scenes on Trajan’s Column seem to concur with such a summation (reading them deliberately as a linear narrative). There are no scenes of combat early on, but of marching and the emperor addressing the troops. We see Roman legionaries constructing a fort or a settlement in stone (scenes X–XII) and then (scene XV) the Romans felling trees. Thereafter they build another fort and then a Dacian is captured (scene XVIII) followed by more fort-building and tree-felling. The first combat is not until scenes XXIV and XXV. With that said, a fragment of Crito’s *Getica* states that the army was attacked as it was crossing a river – but this may, of course, refer to an event later in the campaign.

Dacian round shield boss from Piatra Roşie fortress with a griffin motif. Although the Dacian shields on Trajan’s Column do not show such animal motifs, the circular bosses are shown (usually on oval shields) and other details that suggest the column is trustworthy when compared to archaeological finds (at least in respect of Dacian shields and weapons). It is probable that many examples were brought to Rome for Trajan’s triumph, and others would have been seen earlier from Domitian’s triumph too. (Ángel M. Felicísimo/ Wikimedia/CC BY 2.0)





Held in the Kelten-Römer-Museum, Manching, Germany, these are the remains of a round or oval Dacian shield from Piatra Roșie fortress, showing a bull motif. The visible swirling whorls seem in accord with the details of Dacian shields on Trajan's Column. (Wolfgang Sauber/Wikimedia/CC BY-SA 3.0)

This route can be seen to be a wise one, because Aizis was only 93km from Sarmizegetusa and the route between them was a relatively straight march that encompassed the Iron Gates and the Tapae battlefield – probably somewhere between modern-day Glimboca and Zeicani. The felling of trees depicted on Trajan's Column might also suggest territory denial, robbing the Dacians of suitable places from which to launch their ambushes. If the Romans arrived in a place in strength, the Dacians might not risk an attack and the tree felling could occur with little risk. Given the regularity with which defeated Dacians seemed to melt away into the forest to fight another day, however, the scenes of the felling of trees might also suggest the denial of such potential escape routes. The capturing of a Dacian (scout?) early on in the campaign (also shown on the column) might also suggest that the Romans learned of Dacian plans or deployments. We also do not know if the site of Trajan's battle of Tapae was precisely the same as the site of Domitian's battle of the same name – the ancients tended to use the same name even when the geographical proximity was only approximate. This could be the case if Trajan wanted to erase the memory of Domitian's campaign as he seems to have wanted to do. As such, we might surmise that Trajan actually marched along the same route Domitian had, certainly as far as the battle of Tapae. This route would also presumably have been familiar to veterans of Julianus' campaign, although there may well have been Dacians willing to act as guides for Trajan's forces. Of course, along that route there might also have been resistance and

several other precipitous forts that would need to be reduced first, so we should expect the Romans' progress to have been slow, especially if we read the reduction of forts and the felling of forests shown on Trajan's Column as having taken place along the entire route.

It seems reasonable to suggest that, at Tapae, another Dacian ambush was planned but that this was thwarted, either by Roman scouting vigilance or tactics that forced the Dacians to fight at a greater disadvantage. Cassius Dio's account of Trajan's first campaign is only slightly better preserved than that for Domitian's. Whether this was the fault of later epitomators mixing up their chronology or because the original had already been partially lost is unclear, but it gives us a confused narrative. Nevertheless, in book 68, Dio provides what details we have.

Cassius Dio continues with a summary of Trajan: he was brave and fit, only 42 (Domitian had been even younger in AD 86, only 35). At the end of this praise of Trajan (*RH* 68.6.2–7.5), Dio surmises that 'Decebalus had good cause to fear him' (*RH* 68.8.1). He then cuts to Tapae, however, where a message from the Buri 'and other allies' (carved into a large mushroom – although in Latin) stated that they wanted peace and that Trajan should turn back. This might imply that there had been no fighting up to that point, in which case the Dacians may have withdrawn to around Tapae knowing it was a good place to fight and perhaps expecting to have learned their lessons from the defeat imposed on them by Tettius Julianus in AD 88.

As he had with Domitian, Decebalus had sent envoys before the fighting – but 'not the long-haired men this time, as before, but the noblest among the cap-wearers' (Dio, *RH* 68.9.1). Although the Dacian cap is often said to denote noble status, this brief passage implies that there may have been lesser cap-wearers; it may have been a symbol of being freeborn (implying that long, loose hair was a sign the men were not free). These men begged Trajan to give Decebalus an audience; he would, they said, do everything asked of him.

We get no summary of the fighting in Cassius Dio's *Roman Histories* (the emphasis is on the diplomatic manoeuvres), only that Trajan 'engaged the foe, and saw many wounded on his own side and killed many of the enemy' (*RH* 68.8.2). There is no attempt to deny that this was hard fighting. If the Dacians had made a prepared position it is probable that the Romans would have to fight uphill to get to them, perhaps engaging the Dacians with their auxiliaries while the legionaries made a slower advance, taking casualties all the time from missile and blade. There is, however, no mention of the poisoned weapons we read about in Ovid. Dio does observe that 'when the bandages gave out, [Trajan] is said not to have spared even his own clothing, but to have cut it up into strips. In honour of the soldiers who had died in the battle he ordered an altar to be erected and funeral rites to be performed annually' (*RH* 68.8.2). This seems to refer to the Tropaeum Traiani at Adamclisi – the largest triumphal monument the Romans ever erected – and one scene on Trajan's Column shows a *medicus* tending wounds. Injuries are a part of any war, but it is a factor emphasized on the column, perhaps to reinforce that these were hard campaigns. The battle may be shown in scene XXIV on the column. One of the issues with attempting to correlate the images on the column with the (scant) literary record can be seen here – the Buri message is usually associated with scene IX on the column and yet the battle does not occur until scene XXIV. The scene might suggest the



Legionary tile stamp of *legio XXX Ulpia Victrix* (LEGXXXV). This legion was founded by Trajan (Ulpia was his family *gens* name), either ahead of his first Dacian campaign (along with *II Traiana*) in AD 100 or between Trajan's two campaigns (between AD 102 and 105). The tile stamp was found at the camp of Burginatum (near modern-day Kleve, Germany). The legion was moved to Colonia Ulpia Traiana (modern-day Xanten, Germany) in AD 122. The foundation of this legion increased the number of Roman legions to 30; Augustus had had 28 and this number remained relatively stable throughout the 1st century AD. The number would only be increased again (to 33) by Septimius Severus (r. AD 193–211). (Diana-Artemis/Wikimedia/CC0)

battle was fought in the manner of Mons Graupius, with the auxiliaries doing the fighting and the legions and Praetorians held in reserve, or that it shows the start of the battle when the auxiliaries engaged and that the legions took part later, although the legions are not shown in combat in the scenes of the column.

In response to Decebalus' peace overtures before the battle of Tapae, Trajan sent Lucius Licinius Sura and the Praetorian Prefect Tiberius Claudius Livianus, but Decebalus did not meet with them. Cassius Dio then tells us that Trajan 'seized some fortified mountains and on them found the arms and the captured engines, as well as the standard which had been taken in the time of Fuscus' (*RH* 68.9.3). It is unclear whether this was before the battle or at the same time. Dio also states (*RH* 68.9.4) that a certain Maximus had captured Decebalus' sister and a stronghold. These events seem to have occurred after the battle of Tapae because Decebalus then finally did come to see Trajan. Falling on his knees before the emperor, Decebalus reluctantly agreed

to surrender his arms, engines and engine-makers, to give back the deserters, to demolish the forts, to withdraw from captured territory, and furthermore to consider the same persons enemies and friends as the Romans did, and neither to give shelter to any of the deserters nor to employ any soldier from their empire; for he had been acquiring the largest and best part of his force by persuading men to come to him from Roman territory. (Dio, *RH* 68.9.5–6)

It is interesting to note that there might have been deserters from Roman forces willing to fight for Decebalus against Rome. The rest of the agreements made him (once more) a client king. We can also note that he agreed to give back the engines and engine-makers, the latter presumably the men supplied to him after his treaty with Domitian.

Decebalus also sent envoys to the Senate in Rome. Cassius Dio then abruptly tells us that 'After concluding this compact the emperor left the camp at Zermizegethusa, and having stationed garrisons here and there throughout the remainder of the territory, returned to Italy' (*RH* 68.9.7). The narrative in Dio moves swiftly from the first encounter to the Romans at Sarmizegetusa but along the way capturing several strongholds, Decebalus' sister, the lost standard of Fuscus, and Roman siege engines and engineers. On the corresponding images of Trajan's Column we do indeed see several combats, Dacian settlements being assaulted and Dacians withdrawing into the forests as the Romans continue their advance. What we do not see is the retaking of any standards.

Trajan's Second Dacian Campaign

AD 106

BACKGROUND TO BATTLE

Cassius Dio's narrative continues uninterrupted from Trajan's first campaign into his second. We are even less well informed for the chronology of the second Trajanic campaign, however, making it more difficult to assemble a cohesive sequence of events from Dio's account.

Cassius Dio tells us that 'Trajan celebrated a triumph and was given the title of Dacicus' (*RH* 68.10.2). News reached the emperor, however, that Decebalus was acting contrary to the way he had promised he would according to the treaty agreed. The Dacian was 'collecting arms, receiving those who deserted, repairing the forts, sending envoys to his neighbours and injuring those who had previously differed with him, even going so far as to annex a portion of the territory of the Iazyges' (*RH* 68.10.3). The Senate therefore declared Decebalus an enemy once more. Dio tells us 'Trajan once more conducted the war against him in person instead of entrusting it to others' (*RH* 68.10.4). Trajan did, of course, have commanders and his *consilium*, but we can contrast how he is treated positively, with the sources' disdain reserved for Domitian.

As we have seen, only Strabo gives us a number for the Dacians, and that in the time of Burebista (200,000 men). Additionally, Strabo tells us (*Geo.* 7.3.13) that by his own time in the late 1st century BC or early 1st century AD, that number had shrunk to 40,000. Many modern-day scholars use this later number to posit that the Dacians were still at that strength in AD 85 and again in AD 101. Years of relative peace and prosperity had probably led to population growth, however, and Dacians had inflicted defeats on Domitian's commanders. More than 40,000 warriors were probably available, although no modern-day commentator accepts the number of 200,000 as plausible. McDonnell-Staff considers (2012: 32–33) that Trajan's expedition



outnumbered the Dacians he faced and that Decebalus would have been lucky to muster even half of the Romans' numbers; he allows them 25,000 men at most, facing an invasion force of 75,000 Romans, although the latter number does not seem to include auxiliaries. Pogăciaș (2012: 36) estimates between 20,000 and 50,000 Dacian warriors.

When we remember the large numbers of Dacian settlers in Roman provinces (50,000 in AD 6 and 100,000 c.AD 60), allowing for more than 20,000 warriors – and even more than 50,000 warriors – hardly seems unreasonable; and when we consider that the Dacians had inflicted defeats on substantial Roman forces, and that they fought four wars within a single generation (AD 86, 87–88, 101–02 and 105–06), more equal numbers should be entertained. John the Lydian estimates (*De Magistratibus* 2.28) that Trajan enslaved 500,000 Dacians; a population of that size could surely support many more warriors than these low estimates. It would be fair to estimate that Dacian society immediately prior to Domitian's wars was thriving and probably supported a population larger than at any point in the previous century.

That said, given the prospect of the extensive siege operations Trajan obviously expected, the idea that the Roman expedition outnumbered the Dacians who would be defending such sites also makes sense. It is unlikely that the Dacians would mass their entire manpower in one place, instead having garrisons at the various forts that, individually, may have been outnumbered by the Roman forces that came against them. If the invasion force was double that of the defenders, the Dacians might have fielded, in total, 75,000 warriors.

ABOVE LEFT

Metope 27 (or XXXIX) from the Tropaeum Traiani showing soldiers marching. Note that these soldiers have javelins, rectangular shields, and swords on their right hip. They are not, however, wearing helmets or armour. (CristianChirita/Wikimedia/CC BY-SA 3.0)

ABOVE RIGHT

Metope 29 from the Tropaeum Traiani shows combat between a Roman legionary in *hamata* (mail armour), suggesting that he is an auxiliary, although he has a rectangular curved *scutum* and a helmet. He faces an unarmoured Dacian archer; another Dacian with a straight sword and an oval shield has been killed or wounded in front of him. (CristianChirita/Wikimedia/CC BY-SA 3.0)

Several Dacian peoples transferred their loyalty to Rome at this juncture and Decebalus once again sued for peace. Efforts to raise Dacian forces and summon allies from surrounding peoples continued, however. Also, Decebalus did not demolish his fortifications as he had promised to do, although there is evidence of demolition and Roman occupation at several Dacian sites, especially at Sarmizegetusa (Oltean 2014: 136–39). The Dacians also, we are told, attempted to have Trajan killed by deserters in Moesia; it is unclear exactly when this occurred. Cassius Dio records (*RH* 68.11.3) that the deserters were captured and revealed the plan under torture. Decebalus also invited one of Trajan's commanders, Gnaeus Pompeius Longinus, to meet with him. Longinus accepted, presumably thinking he could obtain Decebalus' surrender. Decebalus arrested Longinus and a centurion with him, however, and sent a message to Trajan demanding that Dacian lands to the banks of the Danube be given back (they were garrisoned with Roman troops). Longinus procured poison, however, and thwarted Decebalus' plans.

Decebalus did not wait for a renewed Roman offensive; in late AD 101/early AD 102, Dacian forces (coordinated by Decebalus?) raided into the Roman province of Moesia, making alliances with the neighbouring Roxolani and Bastarnae and crossing the frozen Danube (shown on scenes XXI–XXII of Trajan's Column). The raid had the desired effect of making Trajan move his forces to counter the new threat. It may have had an additional aim of cutting Roman supply lines, but in this it failed. The Dacians reached Nicopolis ad Istrum (modern-day Nikopol, Bulgaria), where they fought an indecisive engagement, but at Adamclisi they were caught by Trajan's forces and the two sides clashed in battle; both suffered heavy losses. Some commentators think that Cassius Dio's passage referred to this battle, not Tapae. Trajan then

Fully armoured Sarmatian cataphract cavalry flee from much more lightly armoured Roman auxiliary cavalry in scene XXXVII of Trajan's Column. Details of appearance for men such as these Sarmatians suggests verisimilitude, but we do not know how such heavily armoured men came to be bested by much more lightly armed Roman opponents. (Conrad Cichorius/Wikimedia/Public Domain)





advanced towards the Dacian capital, Sarmizegetusa, in AD 102. Decebalus, unable to stop Trajan's advance, sued for peace, and terms were agreed. A Roman garrison was placed in the Dacian capital and a permanent bridge was built across the Danube at Drobeta (modern-day Drobeta-Turnu Severin, Romania). Under the guise of alliance, however, Decebalus once again built up his own defences.

Cassius Dio's next chapter discusses Trajan's stone bridge across the Danube, erected from Pontes (modern-day Kostol, Serbia) to Drobeta, something 'for which I cannot sufficiently admire him. Brilliant, indeed, as are his other achievements, yet this surpasses them' (*RH* 68.13.1). Dio goes on to describe the bridge at length. It was constructed before the opening of Trajan's second Dacian campaign and was a sign of Roman determination; it would prove, however, to be as useful for Dacian raids into Roman territory as it was for Romans marching into Dacia. The architect of the bridge, Apollodorus of Damascus, was also the architect of Trajan's Forum in Rome. For a long time, Apollodorus was also regarded as the designer of the reliefs on Trajan's Column itself, although this is unlikely. He might, however, have had a special bearing on the progress of Trajan's second Dacian campaign.

Scenes XL and XLI of Trajan's Column show a major engagement between Roman and Dacian forces. Note that the intricacy of the oval Dacian shields seems to suggest a more elite, noble force, although none of them wears armour or helmets. What is more, many of them have no caps despite clearly being more elite warriors. Roman auxiliary cavalry and a variety of other Roman *auxilia* are depicted, too: to the right, Dacian casualties are collected and the remainder flee into the forest. Dacian forces melting away into the forests, even in defeat, meant they could reassemble to fight another day. This was just one of the many difficulties the Romans faced; to pursue even a defeated Dacian foe too closely might lead to disaster. (Conrad Cichorius/Wikimedia/Public Domain)



Scenes LXIII and LXIV of Trajan's Column show the Roman expedition's advance into the mountains. Note that the emperor is depicted slightly larger than other figures surrounding him, as he always is on the column. To the right are the distinctive (stereotypical?) Roman auxiliary Numidian cavalry from North Africa. One of the distinctive qualities of Rome's armies was that auxiliary units were allowed to retain the fighting styles and equipment that made them effective. Rome then took advantage of those qualities if and when required. (Conrad Cichorius/Wikimedia/Public Domain)

The siege of Sarmizegetusa, AD 106

In the summer of AD 106, Trajan's three columns, each consisting of almost a full legion (*II Adiutrix*, *IV Flavia Felix* and vexillations from *VI Ferrata*) and an equal or greater number of auxiliaries, put the Dacian capital of Sarmizegetusa under siege. Trajan's perhaps 12,000 legionaries and auxiliaries may have been all the men he needed – he may have learned from the fighting of AD 101–02 that he did not need so many men as he had taken on the first campaign. It is possible from such lessons that he had more auxiliaries than legionaries, perhaps 30,000 men in total. Despite our having no surviving literary account of the battle, and despite incomplete archaeological excavations of the (enormous) site, there are several factors which we can deduce.

While it might be possible to consider three separate columns and attacks, the nature of the terrain and approach make this unlikely. The approach road winds up towards the summit with at least one (easily defensible) switchback and several other turns that would be problematic for the attacker. More probable, therefore, was a single route to attack (1), most likely against the west gate of the fortress after a perhaps slow and arduous approach. Perhaps Trajan's various troops were used in shifts or the men detached to different tasks. If we trust the details of Trajan's Column (and the details we can adduce from Apollodorus' *Poliorcetica*)

to inform us how the fighting occurred, then the legionaries may have been charged with building defensive ditches and *matériel* for the assault (ladders, 'tortoises' (protective rooves of hides), rams, etc.) while the auxiliaries were given most of the actual fighting duties and led the final assault. We do not know how the defenders were deployed, although it is clear there was a path for escape as Decebalus was able to do so; for the final assault, the defenders most probably manned the walls. They may have thrown or rolled rocks down on the attackers among other actions (2) and the Roman auxiliaries may have used *testudo* ('tortoise') formations among their tactical measures.

Among the steps taken during the siege was the cutting of the Dacian water supply. This would have made a final confrontation inevitable, and the Romans had the means to wait out the defenders. The final Roman assault was probably directed against a single place and close to the west gate makes the most sense. The *murus Dacicus* may have put up a stout defence against rams and perhaps ladders played a major role. The defenders may have been weakened and exhausted by thirst when the final assault came, making a Roman breakthrough (3) only a matter of time, leaving those who could escape to do the best they could and mount further defence elsewhere (4).

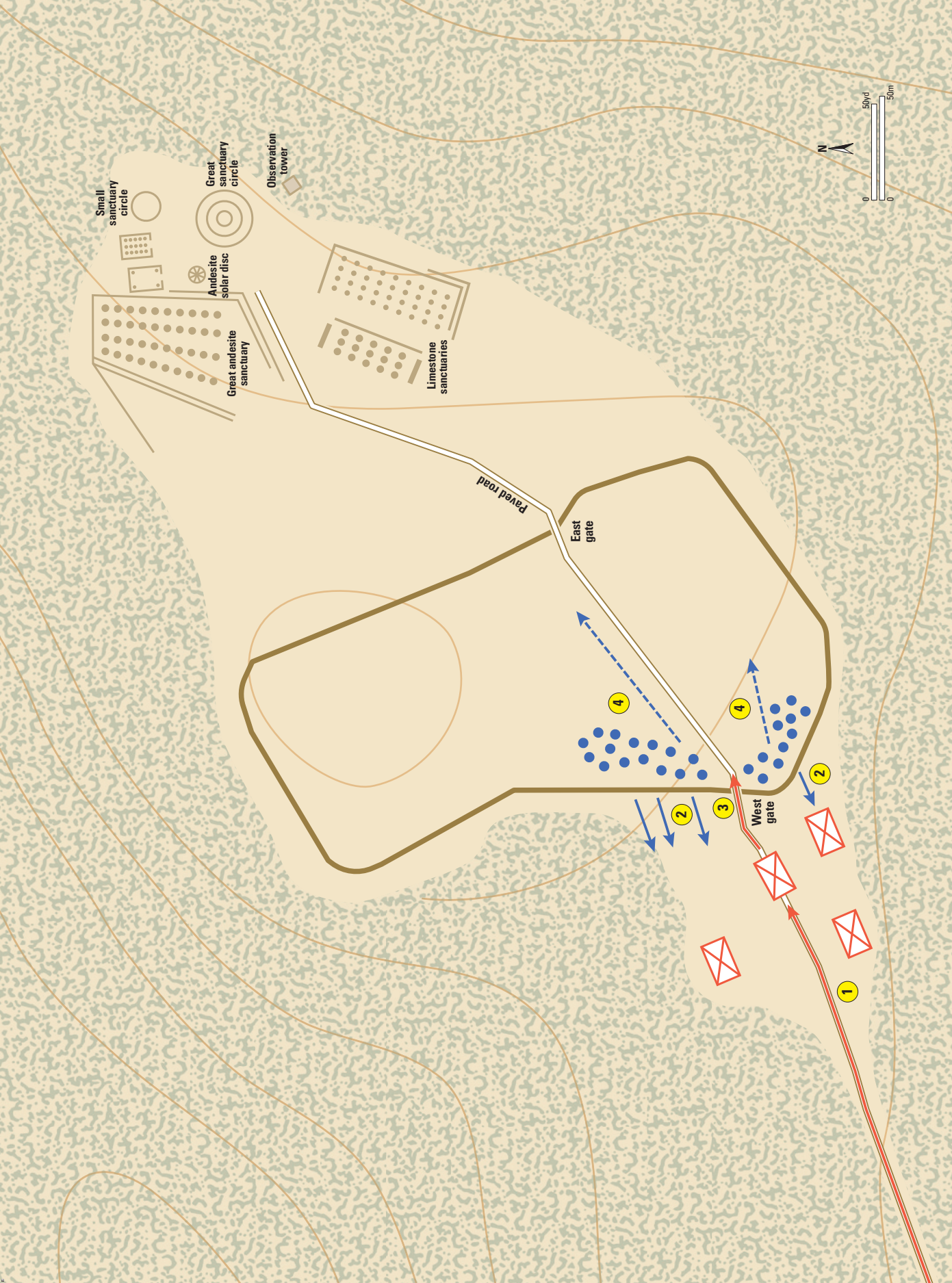
Battlefield environment

Our literary sources do not give us precise details on how the taking of Sarmizegetusa was accomplished. Archaeology has also not been able to provide us with many clues as to the progress of the campaign. Sarmizegetusa itself consisted of a number of manmade terraces along a narrow ridge 2km long at an elevation of 1,000m above sea level in the Orăştie Mountains. The path to the capital was paved with other mountain-top fortresses and forested peaks, any of which would have been ideal for ambush or delaying action. The fort itself was located west of the religious sanctuaries and so it is most probable that the final assault came from the west, because that was the approach to the site even though it would have been the most easily defended.

It is unlikely that the Romans proceeded through the religious sanctuaries. As the Romans advanced up the mountainside and reached each successive terrace, they would have faced Dacian defences, each of which would have needed to be overcome, and all before the final assault on the fortress itself could begin. Trajan's columns give us some clues, but few specifics as to how this was achieved; determination and manpower probably played their part. By the time the Romans reached Sarmizegetusa they had probably reduced several similar forts and faced the same kinds of defences that the Dacians would mount at the capital. The Romans would have now been veterans of this kind of warfare even if they had not begun the campaign with such experience.



A depiction of the ruins of a tower at the fortress of Costești-Cetățuie, Romania, and the mountainous terrain it commands, reinforcing the achievement of the Roman forces in conquering its location. Trajan's forces were compelled to take this fort before moving on to the capital. (Codrinb/Wikimedia/ CC BY-SA 3.0 ro)





Tombstone of the auxiliary cavalryman Titus Flavius Bassus (CIL 13.8308, now in the Römisch-Germanisches Museum, Cologne, Germany). The names Titus Flavius indicate that Bassus achieved citizenship under the Flavians. He had served for 26 years when he died at the age of 46. Bassus was a member of the *ala Noricum*, an *eques* cavalryman who apparently did not advance beyond the lowest rank. Bassus seems to have been Thracian, son of Mucala (a Thracian name) and a member of the Dentelethae tribe, yet the *ala Noricum* was originally raised in Noricum from the Celtic Taurisci people. Recruitment into auxiliary units began in the region in which they were formed, but in the later Julio-Claudian years (AD 37–68), men from outside those regions could also be recruited into them. The triumphant cavalryman riding over a fallen enemy is a motif employed for centuries on cavalry tombstones, although the oval-shielded and naked enemy – another stands behind with a (round?) shield and two javelins – may not give actual clues to the enemies he faced. The *ala Noricum* was stationed in Germania Inferior until AD 160 and could have been deployed on Domitian's (and Trajan's) Dacian campaigns. (Marcus Cyron/Wikimedia/CC BY-SA 3.0)

INTO COMBAT

Soon, Decebalus was raiding over the Danube once again and, in AD 105, Trajan prepared for a new campaign. He would take fewer troops on this second campaign, perhaps in the knowledge that the Dacians could not resist a smaller force. This campaign saw the conquest and reduction of the Dacian fortresses – ones Decebalus had promised to demolish and that Roman expertise had helped him to build. It was, however, to be a relentless engineering offensive. Although Trajan's Column shows battles between Romans and Dacians, at the conclusion of each, the (defeated) Dacians are shown retreating into the forests, battered and bruised but able to fight another day. The Dacians may have retreated to their fortifications and stayed there, hoping that the walls would protect them. Especially after Sarmizegetusa Regia fell in early AD 106, the outcome of the campaign was clear, but the Dacians continued to hold out in the other forts. They should have known, however, that Roman forces would bring their expertise to bear on those fortifications as well; each fell in succession: Popești, Cetățeni, Piatra Neamț, Pecica, Piatra Craivii, Căpâlna, Costești, Bănița, Bălănești and Tilișca. Trajan's Column also shows Roman siege works and conveys the invaders' determination to reduce the Dacian strongholds.

One column of Trajan's forces crossed Trajan's stone bridge at Drobeta, then proceeded to Tibiscum and once again along the course of the Bistra River. There would be no repeat of the battle(s) at Tapae this time. Another column may have crossed much further to the east, at Sucidava (modern-day Corabia, Romania), before proceeding along the Jiu River. A third column may have travelled by an even more easterly route, via modern-day Pitești and towards modern-day Brașov, Romania. The Dacians could not counter this three-pronged advance and the three columns converged on Sarmizegetusa from both east and west. Trajan may have realized that he had all the men he needed in his (almost) three legions – *II Adiutrix*, *IV Flavia Felix* and vexillations from *VI Ferrata* – perhaps 12,000 legionaries. He would have had, at least, an equal number of auxiliaries and we might even propose a greater number of *auxilia*. If the preponderance of scenes involving *auxilia* on Trajan's Column suggest anything, it is perhaps that the emperor deployed more auxiliaries than legionaries, maybe a total force of 30,000 men.

Trajan's architect Apollodorus wrote two works – one (now lost) about Trajan's bridge, and another (*Poliorcetica*) on *Siege-matters*. This latter work may in fact be used to inform our understanding of the progress of Trajan's second campaign. It is most commonly thought that Apollodorus addressed the *Poliorcetica* to the emperor Hadrian, but it seems more probable that Apollodorus wrote it for Trajan. He only, however, addresses the work to a *despota* ('master'). A later criticism of Apollodorus in the anonymous Byzantine treatise *On Strategy* (19.22–39), dating from the 6th century AD or later, lambasts his recommendation for transporting large numbers of troops across rivers on rafts (see Whitehead 2010: 18). This advice would have been most appropriate for Trajan, but not Hadrian. The treatise can be made to apply to Trajan's Dacian campaign (although there are still issues). Apollodorus states (*Pol.* 137) that he has sent an assistant to his master to assist him in the campaign because he is ignorant of the terrain, meaning that in which



Cichorius' scenes XCVIII to XCIX of Trajan's Column show the stone bridge across the Danube, at Drobeta. Here, Trajan offers sacrifice, surrounded by the men and standards of his legions (note there are three). Domitian was credited as the first to bridge the Danube, but visually it is something Trajan seems to have wanted to claim. Certainly, by building a permanent bridge in stone, Trajan could emphasize his accomplishment, although it would be partially demolished in AD 118 – Dacians could use it to cross into Roman territory just as easily as Romans could cross into theirs. (Conrad Cichorius/Wikimedia/Public Domain)

the campaign was being waged. We need not assume that the architect of the bridge across the Danube was at the front in later campaigning, although he does state that he has been with the emperor in his (previous) battles (*Pol.* 138)). Nevertheless, Apollodorus advises that he has designed his advice with the rationale of obtaining the materials needed while on the move and with the manpower available. He also envisaged a campaign in which communities were being besieged throughout, as Trajan was undoubtedly planning to conduct. Certainly, when we look at Trajan's Column, the kinds of troops and the versatility of tasks Apollodorus recommends and those depicted in the relief of the column fit together well.

Although we have no evidence in the sparse literary accounts of the campaign that the advice in Apollodorus' treatise was put into practice, summarizing it certainly suggests that it may have been, and several scenes on Trajan's Column suggest it too, although it too falls short of proof of the treatise's tenets being put into practice (see Whitehead 2010: 137–38). As he had shown in the first campaign, Trajan realized that a Roman victory required the capture of the Dacian capital, Sarmizegetusa Regia, situated at an elevation of 1,000m in the Orăștie Mountains. There were 14 manmade terraces along a narrow ridge for 2km. These massive fortifications remain only half-explored, however, much less excavated. To cut the head of the snake, in summer AD 106 Trajan headed there first.

Apollodorus advises (*Pol.* 139) of the need for rams, tunnels, ladders and other *matériel* made from easily procured materials – and especially that if the enemy cities and walls were on elevated banks, as those of the Dacians undoubtedly were, of the need to guard against things being rolled down at the attackers. To counter such measures Apollodorus advises (*Pol.* 140) the digging of diagonal ditches 1.48m (5 Roman feet) deep and building up the excavated material into a bank. A wedge-shaped protective shelter (all such devices are called 'tortoises' – *chelonon*, sing. *chelone*) could also be moved up the slope so that any object colliding with it would glance off; it could be wheeled and held in place by pegs. Many such shelters could be used until the summit was reached (141). Hides to protect the men working on the siege from arrows and slingshot would be carried by armoured men and fixed into the ground (*Pol.* 142).



Metope 26 from the Tropaeum Traiani at Adamclisi, Romania. Two legionaries are shown with *vexilla* (sing. *vexillum*) flag standards. Only one original survives, dating from the 3rd century AD and now in the Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow, Russia. Carried by the *vexillarius*, it may have been a representation of all kinds of Roman military units; they were the main standard of auxiliary cavalry *alae* (which these obviously are not) and other infantry units, including *vexillatio* detachments from other legions. The men are unarmoured and not wearing helmets, suggesting they are not in any danger of attack and therefore depicting a moment early in the campaign. This does not fit with Oltean (2014: 108–09) and others' ideas that this monument refers only to the battle in Moesia at Nicopolis ad Istrum, and that no Dacians fought there. An unarmoured marching column marching from danger to danger makes no sense. (CristianChirita/Wikimedia/CC BY-SA 3.0)

(*Pol.* 189–93). The passage envisages the taking of a city on the opposite bank of the river; the current would take the raft into place against the enemy wall and, on the raft, men could have ladders. The raft should also have a protective screen that could be brought into place to protect the men as they assaulted the wall.

We can see scaling ladders in scenes CXIII and CXIV of Trajan's Column, which depict an assault on a city late in Trajan's second campaign, presumably on Sarmizegetusa itself. The appearance of these ladders does seem to match that advised in Apollodorus' treatise – they are light, carried by a single man, and are able to be joined together into longer ladders as required (*Pol.* 176–77). Against the wall, we see wheeled wedge-shaped structures that could be the wedges advised by Apollodorus, although they don't entirely match his description (*Pol.* 140–41) and what they actually are remains controversial. They may still be wedges protecting the attackers from devices rolled down against them (barrels?) by the Dacian defenders, in which case they are performing exactly the role described by Apollodorus. This may support the argument that Apollodorus' treatise was written for the second campaign, and so its tenets only came to be adopted during AD 106 (see Whitehead 2010: 138). Perhaps besieging Dacian strongholds in Trajan's first campaign had proven especially tricky. The treatise does open thanking the 'master' for reading the treatise and writing a letter to the author about it, approving it (*Pol.* 137).

Trajan's second campaign progressed and, in summer AD 106, the three columns consisting of Trajan's three legions and auxiliaries put Sarmizegetusa under siege. A final battle was fought nearby after the Romans had broken the water supply to the city. Although we have no literary description of the battle and the scenes of Trajan's Column may not help with specific details, we can envisage how the legionaries constructed the necessary equipment, both that shown on Trajan's Column and described by Apollodorus. The auxiliaries may have been selected to lead the assault and the Dacian fortress was overcome.

When the Roman forces finally reached the enemy wall, a protective roof of hides (also called a 'tortoise') should be erected so that enemy missiles slide off (*Pol.* 143–44). Thus protected, men will dig to undermine the wall – and Apollodorus envisages many of them, advising that they should be less than 5.92m (20 Roman feet) apart. In the holes dug at the base of the wall, propped up to prevent the wall collapsing on the diggers, fires would then be set to bring the wall down (*Pol.* 145–46). Rams, made with 'tortoises' and on wheels, could be applied to towers or gates (*Pol.* 153–64) and one's own towers could be built outside walls too (*Pol.* 164–74). Ladders (*Pol.* 174–88), however, were more easily produced than towers and could be prepared in bulk; Apollodorus recommends (*Pol.* 176) the use of ash, beech, elm and hornbeam – woods that are light and sinewy – for their construction.

Apollodorus' treatise closes with advice on crossing a river with a raft deliberately made longer than the river is wide, so it could also be used as an assault bridge



There may also have been other aspects of siege warfare at play; if the water supply was secured by the Dacians then the siege may not have succeeded, but with a population cut off from water supplies, it was only a matter of time before the Dacian garrison would be forced to fight or surrender.

The progress of Trajan's second campaign seems to have involved very few battles that were not sieges. Perhaps the Dacians had learned that they were no match for the Romans in either set-piece battle or the irregular warfare in which they had excelled at the time of Domitian's campaigns. Dacians would continue to raid Roman provinces, however, so perhaps they were weakened by the number of neighbouring peoples that Rome had been able to remove from an alliance to Dacia, both in terms of allied Germanic peoples and Dacian neighbours. Among the Dacian tribes themselves, some would have looked forward to being allies of Rome and perhaps more important locally because they had remained loyal to the empire at this juncture.

After Sarmizegetusa fell, the defeated Dacians retreated to each successive fortress in turn, but none was a match for Roman determination, ingenuity and experience in siege warfare. We might even suggest that the Romans got better at besieging the fortresses, adding to their knowledge of what was optimal as each siege progressed. Decebalus managed to escape each time and stay ahead of the pursuing Romans.

A final battle was fought at Porolissum (8km from Zalău, Romania). Decebalus had fled from each successive defeat (showing, perhaps, the ease with which a determined retreat could be made from each defeat). He now moved north but was pursued and run to ground by auxiliary cavalry near the later Roman site of Ranistrorum (near modern-day Piatra Craivii, Romania). He committed suicide before being captured; this is depicted on Trajan's Column (scene CXLV) but the cavalryman Tiberius Claudius Maximus boasts of taking the head of the Dacian leader to Trajan at Ranistrorum (*AE* 1985: 721). Interestingly, Trajan's Column does not show Decebalus' head being shown to Trajan, although the column does show other heads being presented to the emperor throughout both campaigns.

Cichorius' scene CXV from the second of Trajan's campaigns shows a wide variety of troop types (legionaries, auxiliaries and auxiliary archers) as well as helmets, armours (banded *segmentata*, *hamata* and *squamata* all in the same scene) and shield designs. This scene and others reiterate that, on Trajan's Column, auxiliaries do the fighting while legionaries are reserved for engineering work (building, cutting down trees, besieging Dacian fortresses and cities). While we know from Tacitus' account of the battle of Mons Graupius (*Agricola* 35–38) that auxiliaries fought in the front line with legionaries in support, this does not seem to have been a wider doctrine, although the observer would be forgiven for thinking it was by looking at the column. By the time of Arrian's *Ektaxis* in the AD 130s, the legions were (once more?) fighting in the front lines. (Conrad Cichorius/Wikimedia/Public Domain)





The pursuit of Decebalus, AD 106



Roman view: Soldiers of a *turma* (squadron) of Roman auxiliary cavalry (*ala II Pannoniorum*) close in on the hiding place of the Dacian king, Decebalus. After the defeat of the Dacians and the siege of their capital, Sarmizgetusa, Decebalus has fled in turn to several of his remaining forts. All have fallen. Finally, being defeated one last time close to the later site of Porolissum (8km from Zalău, Romania), he has fled and been pursued by auxiliary cavalry. Confident that they are close to capturing their

prey at last, the auxiliary cavalymen fan out, instructed by their decurion; some dismount to search on foot while others ride carefully in pursuit of their quarry. Auxiliary cavalry are often shown on Trajan's Column, although it is unclear if the shield designs shown are intended to represent those carried by *ala II Pannoniorum*, which captured Decebalus. The cavalymen carry *spathae* (longer swords), spears and flat oval shields and wear a variety of helmets.



Dacian view: In hiding, defeated for the last time, Decebalus sees the auxiliary Roman cavalry approach, but he is not yet at the point when he will decide to take his own life rather than be captured. He first fled into the forests of the Orăștie Mountains (Romania) sure he could evade capture, but was doggedly pursued at every turn. Eventually he fled north but was again defeated near Porolissum. From his hiding place he still looks

for an avenue for escape and encourages his few remaining retainers to find one for him. He has underestimated his enemy's determination (and acquired knowledge of the terrain). With him are only a few loyal retainers, many others have already surrendered to Trajan. Those with him, however, will surrender as soon as he has been captured (or takes his own life with his short *sica* blade currently still at his waist).

Analysis

ROMAN EFFECTIVENESS

The usual picture of Roman conquests is one of inexorable and inevitable victory: the combination of auxiliary forces that provided the necessary skill in archery, light infantry and cavalry expertise combined with the heavy-infantry prowess of the legions. Analysis of the campaigns against Dacia undertaken by both Domitian and Trajan reveals that such a picture is false, however. Roman armies could be defeated and imperial victories sometimes needed to be hard-fought and were by no means predetermined. Despite the losses suffered by Domitian and the ongoing difficulties of conducting a campaign in Dacia, the Roman Army did, however, learn the lessons it needed to in order to secure victory. This must have involved the adroit combination of the strengths of the various aspects of Roman military might – not only in



Scene LXXVIII of Trajan's Column at the conclusion of Trajan's first campaign – trophies made up of Dacian armour, helmets, shields and weapons. Note that none of the warriors in the previous scenes were shown in such armour or helmets, but they do tally with some of what we can match to the archaeological record. Although there are *draco* standards and quivers (and axes), not a single curved *sica* or *falx* can be seen. (Conrad Cichorius/Wikimedia/Public Domain)

Scene IV of Trajan's Column shows the pontoon bridge over the Danube at Viminacium (near modern Kostolac, Serbia) or Lederata (modern Rama, Serbia). Crossing on pontoon bridges became the standard Roman method of crossing rivers, although Domitian may have been the first to bridge the Danube in such a way. (Conrad Cichorius/Wikimedia/Public Domain)



the use of auxiliaries to engage and counter the similar Dacian strengths in archery, cavalry and irregular warfare so that the legions could get into a position to use their superior hand-to-hand prowess, but also in the use of Roman engineering to secure roads, build bridges, canals and fortifications and besiege Dacian fortresses. There is also a flexibility in the roles legionaries needed to undertake evident in these different roles; we can see on Trajan's Column that these different roles of the legions are celebrated, far more than their engagement in actual fighting.

It was once thought that the *manica* armour on the right arms of Roman legionaries depicted on the Adamclisi metopes (though not on Trajan's Column) was an innovation introduced during the Dacian wars. The earliest and best-preserved example of such armour has now been found at Kalkriese in Germany and dated to AD 9. Nevertheless, the Romans were forced to employ such additional armour to counter the threat of Dacian weapons – but the fact that they had such a counter-measure in their arsenals is testament to Roman preparedness.

We can appreciate the difficulty Roman forces (not to mention commanders) faced in getting the Dacians into set-piece battles where the Roman military forces could harness their superiority. The route to get into such positions, however, must have been hard-fought and frustrating. Dacian forces could melt away or disperse, so the fact the Romans could successfully manoeuvre their forces to achieve a type of battle detrimental to their enemies is impressive. It is even more so when such battles, such as at Tapae, seem to have been imposed on the Dacians when they occupied ground of their choosing. Enduring immense casualties – which, scenes on Trajan's Column seem to suggest, the Romans did – in order to get into a position in which superior Roman arms and armour could prevail in hand-to-hand combat should be recognized. Although the literary evidence does not give us much, and the Adamclisi metopes suggest legionaries in combat, the combat scenes on Trajan's Column seem to emphasize the role of the auxiliaries in doing the actual fighting. As the battle of Mons Graupius also suggests, the role of the auxiliaries in Roman warfare was one that was appreciated by Roman commanders and if equal or greater numbers of auxiliary units were deployed as legions (which seems to be the case), they may have had just as important

a role in combat in certain circumstances as the legions. The fact that the Roman military system could harness such flexibility and knowledge is also something to recognize.

We should also acknowledge the impressive leadership reserves of the Roman forces. Although there tends to be an emphasis on whether Domitian or Trajan was present and a good commander themselves, both emperors could call upon an impressive array of subordinate commanders who knew their jobs. Even when Domitian lost Sabinus and Fuscus in quick succession, he had other capable commanders to call upon; this is evident in the success of Julianus, but the list of men in Juvenal shows there were several others, even if we have to read between the lines of Juvenal's abuse.

DACIAN EFFECTIVENESS

Although we rely mainly on Greek and Latin sources and archaeology to tell us about the Dacians, they were clearly a powerful and threatening force on Rome's northern border. The forces mustered against them in the campaigns of Domitian and Trajan are testament to that threat, as was the sheer size of the permanent garrison on the Danube frontier. The willingness of Rome to pay an annuity to Decebalus after Domitian's campaigns also reveals how costly the war against the Dacians had been; better to pay a 'humiliating' tribute than incur the cost of ongoing military operations. That in itself was a rare Roman admission of the difficulty of a renewed Dacian campaign.

Oltean surmises that Trajan's Dacian expeditions were the 'costliest war Romans ever fought, the war involving the highest number of troops and covering the largest area' (2014: 75). Add to this estimate the cost of Domitian's campaigns, and the price Rome paid for its Dacian conquests was indeed high. Even in the usual positive spin of Roman propaganda we see that Roman casualties cannot be omitted – Trajan's Column shows casualties (itself unusual in victory monuments) and the fragments of the literary accounts mention them.

Dacian weapons and tactics were clearly effective against Roman forces despite the eventual success and victory of Rome. It was not a total imperial victory, however, because much of Dacia remained free of Roman control. Rome's victory probably had more to do with organization, manpower, determination and diplomacy. As Dacian victories over the Romans show, if Dacian troops could surprise or ambush Roman forces, they could defeat them. They could utilize archery, cavalry, irregular warfare and even shock tactics of downhill *falx* charges. The difficulties of terrain that Trajan's Column emphasizes – the need

Bust of a Dacian *comatus* (commoner) – identifiable by the lack of cap and labelled as a Dacian captive – also in the Museo Chiaramonti, Vatican Museums (inv. 2220). The Dacian cap or *pileus* is usually argued to be a mark of a Dacian *tarabostes* (nobleman), although the two-handed *falx*-armed commoners on the Adamclisi monument (such as metopes 31, 32, and 34) do also wear caps. The *pileus* is usually regarded as the symbol of a free man – perhaps more likely that noblemen would wear them, but not unimaginable that there might be free men from the lower classes too. (Daderot/Wikimedia/Public Domain)





Cichorius' scene LXVI of Trajan's Column shows Dacian fortifications and forests. Lepper & Frere (1988: 271) argued that the artist of the column had never seen the actual construction of Sarmizegetusa, depicting polygonal blocks rather than ashlar walls (Wheeler 2010: 1198 n.22), but Stoiculescu (1985) argued that, actually, the flora depicted in the column's scenes accurately reflects those found in modern-day Romania. More recently, Fox has concluded (2019: 66) that the trees carved in intricate detail on the column closely resemble those encountered in Dacia. (Conrad Cichorius/Wikimedia/Public Domain)

to fell trees and build forts and besiege citadels – can be read as concessions to the particular difficulties of campaigning against the Dacians. Although no descriptions of the successive victories at Tapae and elsewhere have been left, they were hard-fought Roman victories and not guaranteed successes. They probably required determined Roman action to overcome the advantages of Dacian weapons and tactics and use of terrain. The fearsomeness of the *sica* and *falx* is suggested in the Adamclisi metopes, but also the dominance of archery and cavalry was difficult to overcome – Rome needed to rely on auxiliaries to counter such tactics and weapons in order to allow the legionaries to press forward to engage in hand-to-hand combat (in which they were the superior force). Making use of such tactics required a conscious sacrifice on the part of the legionaries and their commanders, aware that they were going to suffer casualties to get into combat.

The Dacian fortresses were also problematic. Well sited and individually strong, they needed to be reduced and conquered one by one in what was probably a relentless and difficult progress. Even if the Romans were inexorable, the Dacians probably continued to exact a great toll on the invaders.

Although Decebalus dominated the campaigns of both Domitian and Trajan (whether or not he was the same man as Dorpaneus), the evidence we have is that there were other capable Dacian leaders and that there was an appreciation of both tactical and strategic thinking in Dacian society.

Dacia would remain problematic for the Romans and prompt further campaigns. As Decebalus showed, even when he appeared to have been defeated (or to have agreed to a treaty), he was not beaten – the Romans had to inflict three defeats over 20 years to vanquish him definitively. Thereafter, there were rebellions and Dacian raids and campaigns against the Romans continued. The men of Free Dacia, not cowed by Rome, also continued to be a threat and all of this led to the abandonment of the province in the 3rd century AD, the first relinquishment of conquered territory in the history of the Roman Empire.

Aftermath

Fresh from his victory, Trajan organized Dacia into a Roman province. A new capital, 40km from the old one, was built and called Colonia Ulpia Traiana Augusta Dacica Sarmizegetusa; it was situated near Tibiscum (near modern-day Caransebeș, Romania). Also, 100,000 of the local male population were transported as slaves back to the empire; John the Lydian says (*De Mag.* 2.28) this number was 500,000. This did not include all of Dacia, however; the territory to the north was not brought within Roman control and was known as 'Free Dacia'. The northern Dacians continued to be a thorn in Rome's side, prompting additional punitive expeditions later in the century.

Nor was the course of the new province smooth. We know the names of the first governors (Julius Sabinus, c.AD 105–c.106; Decimus Scaurianus, c.AD 106–c.110; Gaius Avidius Nigrinus, c.AD 110–113; Quintus Baebius Macer, AD 113–c.115; Gaius Julius Quadratus Bassus, c.AD 115–117). The new province may have been denuded of troops for Trajan's Parthian campaign in AD 114/115 and the Dacians showed they were not cowed despite a decade of occupation. They took the opportunity to revolt against Roman rule. They may also have risen up due to Trajan ceasing to pay the agreed annual stipend. Sarmatian raids over the Danube also disrupted the other Danubian provinces. Those in the province of Dacia either allied with the Roxolani and Iazyges or were attacked by them. These attacks were serious enough to make Trajan break off from his Parthian campaign and return to Dacia; on the way, at Selinus in Cilicia (west of modern-day Gazipaşa, Turkey), he fell ill and died on 8 August AD 117 (*CIL* 6.1884). The governor of Dacia, Bassus, was killed in fighting during the revolt in AD 117.

Despite the usual claims that Trajan's successor was an unwarlike ruler, one of Hadrian's initial acts was to withdraw from Syria and send troops to campaign in Dacia in AD 118 to suppress the ongoing revolt. He campaigned against the Roxolani and Iazyges himself. Hadrian also partly demolished Trajan's permanent stone bridge across the Danube. He did consider

This grey marble statue of a bearded Dacian chieftain captive, now in the Capitoline Museums, Rome, shows similar features to those preserved on the Arch of Constantine. The depiction of similar figures on Trajan's Column too suggests a visual repertoire of how Dacians were shown in Roman art. (MM/Wikimedia/ CC BY-SA 3.0)





A bust of the Roman emperor Hadrian, who succeeded Trajan. His first act was to suppress a revolt in the province of Dacia and partly demolish Trajan's bridge over the Danube. The success of actions in Dacia brought peace in the province until AD 158. (Djehouty/Wikimedia/CC BY-SA 4.0)

withdrawing from the province entirely, but eventually chose to remain with a stronger Roman presence. He did, however, cede some territory to the Roxolani. Hadrian then formed Dacia Inferior, made up of those portions of Moesia Inferior north of the Danube, and redesignated Trajan's province Dacia Superior. The *legio IV Flavia Felix* was moved from its base at Berzobis (modern-day Berzovia, Romania) to Moesia Inferior; the remaining legion in Dacia Superior (*legio XIII Gemina*) now being based at Apulum (modern-day Alba Iulia, Romania). Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa was, however, still the civic capital. In AD 124, another province, Dacia Porolissensis, was created in the northern section of Dacia Superior.

Hadrian's other measures to ensure peace within Rome's borders seem to have been successful, because during the remainder of his reign and most of that of his successor, Antoninus Pius (r. AD 138–61), Dacia remained peaceful. Another revolt broke out in AD 158, however. This was suppressed quickly, and Pius took the opportunity to reorganize the provinces once more.

Dacia Porolissensis remained as it was. Dacia Superior was renamed Dacia Apulensis with its capital at Apulum, and Dacia Inferior was renamed Dacia Malvensis, with Malva or Romula (modern-day Reșca Dobrosloveni, Romania) as its capital. Following Pius' death in AD 161, however, it was clear unrest remained not far from the surface and raids began in earnest from c.AD 165. The new emperor, Marcus Aurelius (r. AD 161–80), organized the three provinces into the *Tres Daciae* ('Three Dacias'). The Dacias were heavily involved in the wars of Marcus Aurelius and the governor, given command of all three provinces, Marcus Claudius Fronto, was killed in AD 170.

Fighting continued into the reign of the emperor Commodus (r. AD 177–92), although peace was restored under the emperor Septimius Severus (r. AD 193–211). Peace was maintained under the emperor Severus Alexander (r. AD 222–35). The 3rd century AD saw extensive disruption to the Roman Empire, which included multiple usurpers all over the empire and many invasions, especially across the Danube. The Dacian tribe of the Carpi devastated the provinces of Dacia in the AD 240s and, although the emperor Decius (r. AD 249–51) was declared *restitutor Daciarum* (restorer of Dacia), fighting continued. The emperor Gallienus (r. AD 253–68) took the title *Dacicus Maximus*, but it may have been under him that Dacia was lost entirely. According to Eutropius (*Brev.* 9.15) and other sources (Festus, *Breviarium* 8.2; Aurelius Victor, *De Caesaribus* 33.3), the provinces of Dacia north of the Danube were lost by Gallienus, who transferred units from *legio XIII Gemina* and *legio V Macedonica* to Pannonia (Mócsy 1974: 209).

The complete abandonment of Dacia is usually dated to Aurelian's reign, somewhere between AD 271 and 275. A new province of Dacia, called Dacia Aureliana and situated on the southern bank of the Danube, was split off from Moesia Inferior, with its capital at Serdica (modern-day Sofia, Bulgaria); the Romanized population of the old provinces was transported hence.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Sources

None of the sources for the Dacian wars of Domitian or Trajan survives in its entirety. We rely on fragments, summaries and epitomes of the major authors and some versions in the works of later writers. The best surviving historical summary is from the 3rd century AD historian **Cassius Dio**, whose *Romike Historia* covers both Domitian's and Trajan's campaigns but whose books only survive in fragments and summaries. Among the great losses in the historiography of the later 1st century AD are the works of Publius Cornelius **Tacitus**. His *Histories* break off in AD 70, but originally extended to cover the reign of Domitian until AD 96.

We can use some references from **Sextus Julius Frontinus**, an important figure in the reigns of both Domitian and Trajan who wrote a *Strategemata* in the AD 80s. We can also use the satirist **Juvenal** (Decimus Junius Juvenalis). The poet **Statius** (Publius Papinius Statius) lived through Domitian's reign too, as did **Silius Italicus**, who wrote a poem (the *Punica*) about the Second Punic War (218–201 BC) that includes references to Domitian. The poems of **Martial** (Marcus Valerius Martialis) are also useful.

Another senator who lived through Domitian's reign was Pliny the Younger (Gaius Plinius Caecilius Secundus). Born in AD 61, Gaius **Suetonius** Tranquillius wrote his *De vita Caesarum* ('Twelve Caesars') during the reign of Hadrian. Although his passage noting the military activities of Domitian is brief, it is both important and useful.

The 6th century AD historian **Jordanes** wrote two works that are extremely useful to us. Known as the *Getica*, *De origine actibusque getarum* ('On the Origin and Deeds of the Goths') traces the history of the Goths but also includes Dacian history (although he calls the Dacians Goths on occasion). Jordanes also wrote a *Romana*, a short history of the most noteworthy events in Rome's history, although his summary of Domitian's reign (*Romana* 265) does not include the Dacian wars.

In some cases we must delve deep into Greek and Latin literature for information on the Dacians. Much of the information found in authors like **Herodotus of Halicarnassus** was repeated verbatim by later authors. **Strabo**, writing his *Geography* in the late 1st century BC/early 1st century AD, is also useful for the period before ours. **John the Lydian**, writing his *De Magistratibus* in the 6th century AD, is the only author to give a number for the Dacian prisoners taken by Trajan.

The Augustan poets **Horace**, **Virgil** and **Ovid** mention the Dacians; the latter especially has some pertinent observations on the Dacians less than a century before the wars of Domitian and Trajan. I have also made use of the works of **Velleius Paterculus**, writing his *Roman History* about AD 30, and the *Annales* of Tacitus, for comparative purposes.

Tacitus' *Agricola* gives us detail of a battle fought in Britain only two or three years before the Dacian campaign, which is useful to bear in mind. Similarly, I have made use of Flavius **Josephus'** *Jewish Wars* for what it tells us of the marching order of a Roman legion. It is also useful for the campaigns of Trajan; the next (and only other) detailed account of the legion to survive comes in **Arrian's** *Ektaxis kat' Alanon*, written in the mid-AD 130s.

When it comes to the wars of Trajan, we can again use Cassius Dio, but we know of much that has been lost altogether. Only a single sentence of Trajan's own history of the wars, the *Dacica*, survives, preserved in the work of a 6th-century grammarian, **Priscian**.

The emperor's doctor, **T. Statilius Crito**, wrote a *Getica* of which there are some fragments. The historian **Appian**, writing in the mid-2nd century AD, also wrote a *Dacica* that is now lost, as is **Dio Chrysostom's** *Getica*. It is possible the famous architect **Apollodorus of Damascus'** *Poliorcetica*, a work on siegecraft, was connected to Trajan's Dacian wars.

Inscriptions and coins

- AE* – *L'Année épigraphique*, ed. Mireille Corbier, Patrick Le Roux & Sylvie Dardaine. Multiple volumes (1888–). Paris: Presses universitaires de France.
- BMC RE* – *British Museum Catalogue: Coins of the Roman Empire in the British Museum*. Six volumes (1923–). London: The British Museum.
- CIL* – *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*. Multiple volumes (1853–). Berlin: Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften.

- IGB* – *Inscriptiones Graecae in Bulgaria Repertae*, ed. G. Mihailov. Five volumes (1956–97). Sofia: Academia Literarum Bulgarica.
- ILS* – *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*, ed. H. Dessau. Three volumes (1892–1916). Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung.
- RIC* – *Roman Imperial Coinage*. Ten volumes (1923–94). London: Department of Coins and Medals, The British Museum.

Ancient works

- Anonymous Byzantine Treatise on Strategy*, trans. G.T. Dennis (1985), in *Three Byzantine Military Treatises*. Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks.
- Apollodorus Mechanicus, *Siege-matters (Poliorcetica)*, trans. D. Whitehead (2010). Stuttgart: Franz Steiner.
- Arrian, *Tactica*, trans. G. DeVoto (1993). Chicago, IL: Ares Publishers.
- Cassius Dio, *Roman History*, trans. E. Cary (1914–27). Nine volumes. Cambridge, MA & London: Harvard University Press.
- Dio Chrysostom, *Discourses*, trans. J.W. Cohoon & H. Lamar Crosby (1932–51). Five volumes (volume two). Cambridge, MA & London: Harvard University Press.
- Eutropius, *Breviarium*, trans. J.S. Watson (1890), in *Justin, Cornelius Nepos, and Eutropius*. London: G. Bell.
- Marcus Cornelius Fronto, *Principia Historiae*, trans. C.R. Haines (1920). Cambridge, MA & London: Harvard University Press.
- Julius Caesar, *Gallie War*, trans. H.J. Edwards (1917). Cambridge, MA & London: Harvard University Press.
- Justin, *Epitome of the Philippic History of Pompeius Trogus*, trans. J.S. Watson (1890), in *Justin, Cornelius Nepos, and Eutropius*. London: G. Bell.
- Herodotus, *Histories*, trans. H. Cary (1848). London: Henry G. Bohn.
- Horace, *Odes*, trans. C.E. Bennett (1914). Cambridge, MA & London: Harvard University Press.
- Hyginus, *Liber de munitionibus castrorum*, trans. D.B. Campbell (2018). *Fortifying a Roman Camp. The Liber de munitionibus castrorum of Hyginus*. Glasgow: Bocca della Verità Publishing.
- John the Lydian, *De Magistratibus*, trans. T. Carney (1971). Lawrence, KS: Coronado Press.
- Jordanes, *The Gothic History*, trans. C.C. Mierow (1915). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Josephus, *Jewish War*, trans. W. Whiston, A.M. Auburn & B.J.E. Beardsley (1895). Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson & Sons.
- Josephus, *Jewish War*, trans. H.St.J. Thackeray (1927–28). Two volumes. Cambridge, MA & London: Harvard University Press.
- Lucian, *How to Write History*, trans. K. Kilburn (1959). Eight volumes (volume six). Cambridge, MA & London: Harvard University Press.
- Ovid, *Tristia, Epistulae Ex Ponto*, trans. A.L. Wheeler (1924). Cambridge, MA & London: Harvard University Press.
- Peter the Patrician, *History*, trans. T.M. Banchich (2019), in *The Lost History of Peter the Patrician: An Account of Rome's Imperial Past from the Age of Justinian*. London & New York, NY: Routledge.
- Philostratus, *Lives of the Sophists*, trans. W.C. Wright (1921). Cambridge, MA & London: Harvard University Press.
- Pliny the Elder, *The Natural History*, trans. J. Bostock & H.T. Riley (1855). London: Taylor & Francis.
- Pliny the Younger, *Letters and Panegyricus*, trans. B. Radice (1969). Two volumes. Cambridge, MA & London: Harvard University Press.
- Sextus Julius Frontinus, *Strategemata*, trans. C.E. Bennett (1925). Cambridge, MA & London: Harvard University Press.
- Silius Italicus, *Punica*, trans. J.D. Duff (1927). Two volumes. Cambridge, MA & London: Harvard University Press.

- Statius, *Silvae*, trans. J.H. Mozeley (1928). Two volumes. Cambridge, MA & London: Harvard University Press.
- Strabo, *Geography*, trans. H.L. Jones (1917–32). Eight volumes. Cambridge, MA & London: Harvard University Press.
- Tacitus, *Annals*, trans. A.J. Church & W.J. Brodribb (1876). London: K. Clay, Sons, & Taylor for Macmillan & Co.
- Tacitus, *Histories*, trans. C.H. Moore (1925 & 1931). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Tacitus, *The Agricola and Germania*, trans. A.J. Church & W.J. Brodribb (1877). London: Macmillan.
- Vegetius, *Epitome of Military Science*, trans. N.P. Milner (1993). Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.
- Velleius Paterculus, *The Roman History*, trans. F.W. Shipley (1924). Cambridge, MA & London: Harvard University Press.

Modern works

- Bennett, J. (1997). *Trajan: Optimus Princeps: A Life and Times*. London: Routledge.
- Bury, J.B. (1893). *A History of the Roman Empire From its Foundation to the Death of Marcus Aurelius*. New York, NY: Harper & Brothers Publishing.
- Campbell, B. (2000). *The Writings of the Roman Land Surveyors*. London: Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies, Journal of Roman Studies Monograph 9.
- Cichorius, C. (1896). *Die Reliefs der Traianssäule. Erster Tafelband: 'Die Reliefs des Ersten Dakischen Krieges', Tafeln 1–57*. Berlin: Verlag von Georg Reimer.
- Cichorius, C. (1900). *Die Reliefs der Traianssäule. Zweiter Tafelband: 'Die Reliefs des Zweiten Dakischen Krieges', Tafeln 58–113*. Berlin: Verlag von Georg Reimer.
- Coulston, J.C.N. (1989). 'The Value of Trajan's Column as a Source for Military Equipment', in C. van Driel-Murray, ed., *Roman Military Equipment: The Sources of Evidence*. Oxford: British Archaeological Reports: pp.31–44.
- Crook, J.A. (1955). *Consilium Principis. Imperial Councils and Counsellors from Augustus to Diocletian*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Dana, D. (2001). 'Mars Geticus. Realitate istorică sau literatură?', *Ephemeris Napocensis* 11:15–39.
- Davies, G.A.T. (1920). 'Topography and the Trajan Column', *Journal of Roman Studies* 10: 1–28.
- Fox, A. (2019). 'Trajanic trees: The Dacian forest on Trajan's column', *Papers of the British School at Rome* 87: 47–69.
- Lepper, F.A. & Frere, S. (1988). *Trajan's Column: A New Edition of the Cichorius Plates*. Gloucester: Alan Sutton Publishing.
- McDermott, W. & Orentzel, A. (1977). 'Silius and Domitian', *American Journal of Philology* 98: 24–34.
- McDonnell-Staff, P. (2012). 'Worth a double triumph: Trajan's Dacian campaigns', *Ancient Warfare Magazine* 6.2: 27–34.
- Mócsy, A. (1974). *Pannonia and Upper Moesia*. London: Routledge.
- Oltean, R. (2014). *Dacia – The Roman Wars: Volume I Sarmizgetusa*. Zutphen: Karwansaray Publishers.
- Parker, H.M.D. (1928). *The Roman Legions*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Pogăciaș, A. (2012). 'Noblemen, warriors and peasants: the Dacian army', *Ancient Warfare Magazine* 6.2: 35–39.
- Robinson, H.R. (1975). *The Armour of Imperial Rome*. London: Arms & Armour Press.
- Stefan, A.S. & Chew, H. (2015). *La colonne trajane*. Paris: Editions Picard.
- Stoiculescu, C.D. (1985). 'Trajan's Column: Documentary Value from a Forestry Viewpoint', *Dacia* 29: 81–98.
- Syme, R. (1978). *History in Ovid*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Taylor, M.J. (2012). 'Close combat on the Danube: the Adamklissi monument', *Ancient Warfare Magazine* 6.2: 10–12.
- Wheeler, E.L. (2010). 'Rome's Dacian Wars: Domitian, Trajan, and Strategy on the Danube, Part I', *Journal of Military History* 74: 1185–227.
- Wheeler, E.L. (2011). 'Rome's Dacian Wars: Domitian, Trajan, and Strategy on the Danube, Part II', *Journal of Military History* 75: 191–219.
- Williams, G. (1994). *Banished Voices: Readings in Ovid's Exile Poetry*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Zahariade, M. (2012). 'A Monumental effort', *Ancient Warfare Magazine* 6.2: 6–9.

INDEX

References to illustrations are shown in **bold**.
References to plates are shown in bold with
caption pages in brackets, e.g. 50–51, (52).

Aegyssus, fighting for 27–28, 29
Apollodorus of Damascus 61, 62, 64–66
archers/archery: (Rom) 11, 12, 13, 16, 17, 34,
38, 67; (Dac) 17, 18, 24, 29, 59, 72, 73, 74
armour: (Rom) 7, 8, 12, 13, 14, 23, 24, 25,
26, 29, 39, 50–51, (52), 53, 59, 59, 67, 72;
(Dac) 14, 15, 19, 28, 29, 51, 61, 71
Augustus (emperor) 11, 14, 15, 18, 30, 53, 57
auxiliary forces (Rom) 14, 21–22, 30, 32, 35,
56, 57, 59, 62, 63, 66, 72–73, 74
archers 12, 13, 38, 67
cavalry 4, 6, 11, 22, 25, 26, 27, 29, 43, 48,
60, 61, 64, 65, 67, 68–69, (70), 71
infantry 4, 5, 6, 8, 11, 14, 22, 26, 27, 29,
34, 38, 39, 48, 53, 61, 71
missile troops 11, 26

Bastarnae (the) 7, 18, 31, 49, 60
bows and arrows: (Rom) 12, 13, 28; (Dac) 15,
18, 19, 29
Burebista (king) 7, 31, 49, 58
Buri (the) 7, 23, 56

caps (*pileus*) 14–15, 16, 17, 23, 31, 49, 56,
61, 73, 74
cavalry forces: (Rom) 4, 6, 10–11, 22, 25, 26,
27, 29, 34, 35, 38, 39, 43, 48, 60, 61, 64,
65, 67, 68–69, (70), 71; (Dac) 18, 24, 28,
54, 72, 73, 74
centuries/centurions 5, 22, 27, 28, 34, 38, 39,
39, 45, 60
clothing/dress: (Rom) 5, 8, 11, 12, 13, 21, 26,
50–51, (52), 53, 59, 66, 72; (Dac) 5, 6, 8,
16, 17, 17, 23, 24, 29, 50–51, (52), 74, 75
Cornelius Fuscus 20, 27, 30, 33, 49, 54, 57, 73
ambush of column 8, 12, 16, 23, 29, 34, 35,
36, 37–39, 40, 41, 42, 45, 46
Chatti (the) 21, 32
Claudius (emperor) 22, 30, 37
Cosmosicus/Decaeneus (rulers) 31
Coyllus (king) 28, 31

Dacia/Dacians 32, 36, 54, 76
as ally of Rome 45, 60, 67
creation/organization/reorganization 4, 6, 8,
9, 74, 75, 76
enslavement of 59, 75
rebellions/revolts in 74, 75–76
Roman control of 21, 36, 73, 75:
abandonment of 74, 76; forces in 8, 9,
32, 46, 47, 48, 60, 61, 71–74, 76
as settlers (Roman provinces) 30, 59
Dacian forces/warriors 4–7, 4, 7, 14, 15, 21,
24, 36, 38, 49, 52, 58–59, 60
comatus (commoners) 14, 15, 73
falx-men 5, 7, 16, 17, 23, 24, 24, 73
raids into Roman territory 6, 7, 15, 18–19,
28, 31, 32, 39, 60, 61, 67, 74
tarabostes (nobles) 14, 17, 23, 24, 29, 31,
49, 50–51, (52), 56, 61, 73
tactics 18, 28, 29, 34, 35, 37, 46, 54, 73, 74
Decebalus (king) 5, 14, 18, 23, 28, 32, 36, 37,
38, 44, 49, (52), 54, 56, 59, 60, 74
as ally of Rome 42, 57
annuity to 33, 42, 73
capture/death 48, 67, 68–69, 70
escapes/defeats 8, 62, 67, 70

peace with 31, 41, 44, 45, 57, 58, 60, 61
Diurpaneus (commander/king) 23, 32, 42, 49
Domitian (emperor) 21, 22, 34, 37, 38, 41, 43,
44, 45, 48, 52
Dacian campaign 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 14,
19, 20–21, 23, 29, 30–34, 35, 36–43, 44,
45, 46, 48–49, 50–51, (52), 54, 55, 56,
57, 58, 64, 65, 67, 73
derision for 5, 20, 21, 33, 36, 40, 41, 42,
49, 55, 58
popularity with Army 11, 14, 41, 44, 45
as tyrant 5, 19, 33, 44, 45
Dorpaneus (commander/king) 23, 28, 32, 36,
37, 38, 49, 74
Duras (king) 14, 23, 32, 33, 49

falces (Dac) 5, 7, 14, 16, 16, 17, 17, 18, 23, 24,
24, 28, 29, 71, 73, 74
fleets (Rom) 30–31, 32, 45, 46, (52)
Fonteius Agrippa 20, 28, 29, 31, 32, 36
fortifications: (Rom) 28, 30, 32, 45, 46, 54, 72,
74; (Dac) 8, 9, 15, 23, 29, 40, 42, 46, 50,
53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 62, 62, 63, 64,
65–67, 70, 72, 74, 74

Gaius Julius Civilis 22, 31–32
Gaius Julius Quadratus Bassus 19, 53, 75
Gaius Licinius Mucianus 22, 28, 29, 31
Gaius Oppius Sabinus 32, 36, 40, 42, 73
Germania Inferior/Superior 21, 32, 41, 42, 64
Getae (the) 6, 7, 17, 27, 28, 30

Hadrian (emperor) 21, 64, 75–76, 76
helmets: (Rom) 4, 6, 7, 10, 12, 13, 14, 21,
23, 24, 28, 39, 42, 43, 53, 59, 59, 61, 67,
68–69, 70; (Dac) 14, 15, 29, 61, 71

Iazyges (the) 18, 28, 29, 31, 49, 58, 75

legionaries 6, 8, 11, 14, 14, 34, 35, 39, 42, 48,
50–51, (52), 56, 57, 59, 65, 66, 67, 72
in combat 26, 53, 74
roles of 25, 54–55, 56–57, 62, 66, 67, 72,
74

legions 6, 12, 14, 25, 27, 29, 30, 31, 32, 34,
37, 38, 40, 42, 53, 72: *I Adiutrix* 37, 48;
I Flavia 41; *I Italica* 30, 48; *I Minervia*
10, 41, 48; *II Adiutrix* 26, 37, 41, 45, 48,
50–51, (52), 62, 63, 64; *II Augusta* 26; *II*
Traiana 10, 48, 57; *III Gallica* 21, 45; *III*
Scythica 41; *IV Flavia* 37, 62, 63; *IV Flavia*
Felix 48, 62, 63, 64, 76; *IV Macedonica*
48; *IV Scythica* 30, 48; *V Alaudae* 10, 30,
37, 37, 40; *V Macedonica* 30, 41, 48, 76;
VI Ferrata 28, 48, 62, 63, 64; *VI Victrix*
26; *VII Augusta* 37; *VII Claudia* 30, 41,
48, 53; *VII Claudia Pia Fidelis* 37, 48;
IX Hispana 26; *X Fretensis*/*X Geminal*
XI Claudia 48; *XII Fulminata* 40, 45, 48;
XII Rapax 30; *XIII Gemina* 48, 76; *XIV*
Gemina 48; *XV Apollinaris* 20, 38; *XX*
Valeria Victrix 26; *XXI Rapax* 40, 48;
XXX Ulpia 10, 48, 57
command of (*legati*) 20–22, 34, 35, 39, 48
composition/strength 10–11, 22, 25, 66
deployment/roles 25–26, 67, 71, 72, 73
destruction/loss of 10, 29, 37, 42–43, 48
disbandment of 34, 40
marching order 34, 35, 36, 38, 39
numbers of 10, 57
raising of new 10, 38, 40, 41, 48

recruitment for 10, 14
Lucius Verus (emperor) 19

Marcus Aurelius (emperor) 6, 29, 37, 44, 76
Moesia Inferior/Superior/Secunda 8, 9, 18, 20,
36, 37, 41, 60, 66, 76
Dacian raids in 6, 15, 28, 32, 39, 60
Roman forces in 21, 30, 31, 32, 40, 45
musicians (Rom) 34, 35, 39

Nerva (emperor) 19, 21, 43, 45, 52

Pannonia, Roman forces in 20, 32, 37, 38
Parthian campaign 18, 19, 32, 48, 53, 74
Praetorian Guard 6, 11, 11, 12, 14, 21, 21,
22, 33, 34, 35, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 45,
47, 48, 57
Porolissum, battle at 8, 9, 67, 70

Roman forces (command of)
consilium principis 20, 58
decurions 22, 48, 68–69, 70
legati 20–22, 34, 35, 39, 48
praefectus castrorum 21, 22
primus pilus 22, 27, 45
Roxolani (the) 18, 21, 28, 29, 31, 49, 60, 75,
76

Sarmatia, fighting in 30, 40, 42, 60, 62, 63
Sarmatians (the) 18, 20, 31, 75
Scorylo (chieftain/ruler) 28, 29, 31, 32
scouts/scouting forces (Rom) 12, 12, 13, 16,
16, 34, 38–39, 56
Septimius Severus (emperor) 40, 57, 76
Sextus Julius Frontinus 21, 21, 41–42, 45
shields: (Rom) 4, 5, 7, 8, 11, 14, 21, 24, 25,
26, 28, 50–51, (52), 53, 59, 59, 61, 67,
68–69, (70), 72; (Dac) 6, 8, 14, 15, 29, 54,
55, 61, 71, 74
sicae (Dac) 7, 14, 17, 18, 19, 24, 27, 28, 29,
50–51, (52), 68–69, (70), 71, 74
siege equipment/warfare: (Rom) 8, 26, 29, 34,
39, 40, 42, 49, 57, 64, 65–67; (Dac) 29,
42, 57
spears/javelins: (Rom) 5, 11, 11, 21, 25, 25, 26,
59; (Dac) 7, 18, 19, 24, 52
standards (Rom) 12, 25, 27, 34, 35, 37, 38, 39,
40–41, 50–51, (52), 53, 57, 66, 72; (Dac)
29, 71
swords (Rom) 5, 11, 12, 13, 14, 18, 23, 25,
26, 27, 28, 33, 59, 68–69, (70); (Dac) 6, 18,
19, 29, 52

Tapae, battle(s) at 6, 8, 9, 29, 34, 36, 41, 46,
47, 49, 54, 55, 56–57, 60, 64, 72, 74
Tettius Julianus 8, 41, 44, 55, 56, 73
Thrace/Thracia/Thracians 6, 7, 18, 24, 30, 64
Tiberius Claudius Maximus 45, 48, 57, 67
Trajan (emperor) 4, 44, 72, 76
first Dacian campaign 4–5, 6, 8, 9, 11, 19,
20, 21, 23, 31, 32, 33, 37, 38, 40, 44–46,
47, 48–49, 50–51, (52), 52, 53–57, 53,
58, 61, 62, 64, 66, 71, 73
legions, raising of 10, 40, 48
second Dacian campaign 4–5, 6, 8, 9, 11,
19, 20, 23, 29, 31, 32, 33, 38, 40, 48,
57, 58–63, 61, 63, 64–67, 65, 67, 68–69,
(70), 73

Vespasian (emperor) 20, 22, 28, 29, 31, 32, 34,
38, 43, 53

OSPREY PUBLISHING
Bloomsbury Publishing Plc
Kemp House, Chawley Park, Cumnor Hill, Oxford OX2 9PH, UK
29 Earlsfort Terrace, Dublin 2, Ireland
1385 Broadway, 5th Floor, New York, NY 10018, USA
E-mail: info@ospreypublishing.com
www.ospreypublishing.com

OSPREY is a trademark of Osprey Publishing Ltd

First published in Great Britain in 2025
This electronic edition published in 2025 by Bloomsbury Publishing Plc

© Osprey Publishing Ltd, 2025

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or any information storage or retrieval system, without prior permission in writing from the publishers.

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

ISBN: PB 9781472864239; eBook 9781472864246;
ePDF 9781472864253; XML 9781472864260

Maps by www.bounford.com
Index by Rob Munro
Typeset by PDQ Digital Media Solutions, Bungay, UK

Osprey Publishing supports the Woodland Trust, the UK's leading woodland conservation charity.

To find out more about our authors and books visit
www.ospreypublishing.com. Here you will find extracts, author interviews, details of forthcoming events and the option to sign up for our newsletter.

Artist's note

Readers may care to note that the original paintings from which the colour plates in this book were prepared are available for private sale. All reproduction copyright whatsoever is retained by the publishers. All enquiries should be addressed to:

info@g-rava.it

The publishers regret that they can enter into no correspondence upon this matter.